



MEMOIRS
OF
LADY WOODFORD.

VOL. II.



THE

M. E. M. O. I. R. S.

OF

LADY WOODFORD

V. O. L. II

THE

I

A

FO

M E M O I R S
O F
LADY WOODFORD.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF,
AND ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

V O L. II.



L O N D O N :

Printed by GEORGE BIGG,
For F. and J. NOBLE, at their respective Circulating
Libraries, near Middle-Row, Holborn, and St. Mar-
tin's-Court, near Leicester-Square.

MDCCLXXI.

MEMOIR

Harvard College Library
Greenough Fund
July 23, 1954

LADY WOODFORD

WRITTEN BY HERSELF

AND ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND

Y O L D



L O N D O N

Printed by George B. ...
For F. and J. No. 1, at their respective ...
Litho. and ...
No. 1, Court ...

MDCCLXXI

MEMOIRS

OF

LADY WOODFORD.

AS soon as Lady Woodford was gone, I begged Mrs. Stevens to let me retire to the room, in which I was to rest that night. She complied with my request, after having first tried to prevail on me to promise to come down, and to endeavour to eat a bit of supper.—I told

VOL. II.

B

her

and

her, "It was impossible, and desired to
"be left to myself." She, at length, con-
sented.

When I was alone, I threw myself on
the bed, and gave a loose to an affliction
which, at that time, seemed to bid de-
fiance to every mode of alleviation : and
when I considered that Lord Woodford
would be rendered very unhappy, on
hearing of my hasty flight from him, my
anguish was doubled, often did I shriek,
so torturing were my sensations sharpened
by despair.

In a few days, the treatment which I
received—the gentlest imaginable—made
me more resigned to my lot, tho' it
could not render me entirely contented
with it.—Fewer were my violent excla-
mations, but I sunk into a melancholy
state from which not all Mrs. Stevens's
friendly efforts could rouse me.—Lord
Woodford engrossed my thoughts, day
and

LADY WOODFORD. 3

and night ; and I fancied that he was as wretched as myself.

At last, Lady Woodford made her appearance : she looked as if she had been ill.—She was very ferious : yet she was particularly kind to me. I longed, impatiently, to know how my Lord did, but was afraid to enquire after him.—However, the complacency of her behaviour, and the good natured tone of her voice, when she spoke to me, conquered my diffidence. Lifting up my eyes to her friendly face, I said, “ Has “ your ladyship been indisposed?”

“ No, Fanny;” replied she, with an affectionate voice.

“ Has my Lord?” added I eagerly —while my cheeks glowed.

“ He is better,” answered she, with a sigh.

“Gracious Heaven!” cried I, cruelly alarmed, “has he been sick then?” “Wretch that I am!—perhaps I have been “the cause of his illness.”

I could say no more; I sunk down into a chair: a violent shower of tears hindered me from fainting. I gave myself up to a sorrow which I could not suppress, and the indulgence of it afforded *some* ease to my mind. I was even rejoiced, if I may use the word, so to grieve, as my Lord had suffered so much on *my* account.

Lady Woodford appeared to be considerably touched at my affliction. She assured me that her son had been very much out of order, and that, to her extreme concern, *my* removal from him had occasioned his indisposition: “But I hope,” continued she, “as he is now growing better,

“ter, that time will bring him into a condition to hear reason.”

I sighed, for I knew that if *his* behaviour should prove answerable to *her* wishes, I should be totally forsaken by him.—I was convinced, indeed, of the propriety of such a behaviour on his side, but I could not help grieving to think that there should be a necessity for it. I endeavoured to appear composed, but all my attempts were to no purpose.

Lady Woodford saw my struggles, and she pitied me; yet she could not relinquish the design she had so long projected, with a heart-felt pleasure.—She made a number of affectionate speeches to me, but when she rose to go, added—
 “You will remember your promise,
 “Fanny, if my son, when he comes
 “abroad, offers to visit you.”

My pride here combated a little with

my tenderness for Lord Woodford; and I thought I should discover considerable meanness by shewing a desire to come into a family who were so unwilling to have me allied to them. I, therefore, assured her, with a haughtiness, for which I afterwards condemned myself, "That she might depend upon my not seeing my Lord."

As soon as she was gone, I repented of my promise, and of the manner in which I confirmed it. I began to look upon myself as the most abject of human creatures, for receiving favours from a lady who beheld me in so despicable a light, when it was in my power to gain a subsistence with my pencil. But when I also considered, that my mother might possibly find me out, and drag me back to Sir Thomas, or sell me to any other man who would lay down a large sum

LADY WOODFORD. 7

fun for me, I was shocked, I was ter-
 rified, I was humbled to the dust: and
 by the time that I reached my chamber,
 wondered how such a little insignificant
 girl of no birth nor fortune, should ever
 have imagined that a man of Lord
 Woodford's rank would think of ma-
 king her his wife. I even began to be
 astonished at my assurance, for having
 ever thought of such a thing. "To ima-
 "gine myself deserving of an alliance
 "with Lord Woodford, how ridiculous!
 "I have met with an uncommon friend in
 "Lady Woodford, and ought to thank
 "Heaven for being in the situation I am:
 "yet how differently was I situated in
 "my little rural retreat, blessed with my
 "Lord's charming society! with him
 "conversing!—O how painful is recollec-
 "tion!—To remember the happy hours I
 have enjoyed by *his* side—hours never

“to return ! But I must endeavour to for-
 “get them:—how delightful has been
 “my dream ! why was I ever waked out
 “of it ? Yet I should not repine—tho’ we
 “*must* feel pangs of regret, when we are
 “deprived of what constituted all our
 “felicity in this world.”

When I had for some time given way
 to a train of melancholy reflections, a
 new set rose in my mind. I returned
 fervent thanks to the Almighty for ha-
 ving restored Lord Woodford’s health,
 and made a firm resolution to avoid him,
 if possible, lest I should be the source of
 any fresh trouble to him. I, then, re-
 turned to Mrs. Stevens, who treated me
 with a greater kindness and respect than
 usual : as she and Lady Woodford had been
 in private together, I could not help at-
 tributing the increased civilities I receiv-
 ed to her ladyship’s injunctions.—With
 those

those civilities, from whatever spring they flowed, I could not but be pleased; and I strove to return them.—My grateful behaviour soon gained me Mrs. Stevens's affection: whenever I was with *her*, I endeavoured to be cheerful; when I was alone, I reflected so much upon Lord Woodford's amiable qualities, and upon all those tender attentions which had won my heart, that I blamed myself severely for having, by my desertion, impaired his health, and deprived him of happiness: my sighs were frequent, and often were my eyes bedimmed with my tears.

In a few days after Lady Woodford's visit, a genteel young man came to see Mrs. Stevens: she called him Mr. Gordon. He staid supper; behaved with politeness to Mrs. Stevens, but his carriage to me was still more polite,

I was very sensible of his partiality, yet it displeased me, because I was neither in humour to receive his distinguishing *douceurs*, nor to return them.

Mrs. Stevens took notice of the particularity of his behaviour when he was gone.—“Mr. Gordon is a very agreeable man, I think.”

I could not contradict that declaration, without rendering my judgment questionable, for most women would have been of *her* opinion.

“He is very deserving of esteem,” added she: “having made an excellent son to a father who was not so good as he ought to have been; but an aunt as amply rewarded him, by leaving him much more than his father squandered, during his life. Mr. Gordon has, also, a genteel place, and his expectations are very flattering.”

This

This speech was evidently pointed at me, but I confess I thought I was, in no shape, concerned in it; I, therefore, paid little attention to it. However, in a short time afterwards, Mr. Gordon having been extremely studious to please me, made a serious avowal of his love and regard for me, and was proceeding to give me a minute account of his affairs.

I stopped him. "I cannot think of marrying, Sir," replied I, "and beg you would say no more to me upon this subject."

The manner in which I uttered my reply, would have been, I imagined, quite sufficient to hinder a renewal of his addresses, but he returned to the charge, with great warmth. Finding, however, at last, after repeated repulses, that he gained not the least ground upon

me, he altered his behaviour, but continued his visits to Mrs. Stevens, and attempted, by numberless assiduities, to render himself agreeable to me.—Vain were all his attempts; I thought too much about Lord Woodford to be affected by the carriage of any other man. I fancied, perpetually, that I heard him sigh, and complain to his mother for having separated us; I fancied that I saw him pale, dejected, despairing.

While I was mournfully ruminating on past scenes, and almost wishing, in the bitterness of dependence, that I had never known Lord Woodford, I was informed of his arrival.

I started: I changed colour: my heart fluttered, as if it would have flown from my bosom to meet him; but when I reflected upon the promises I had made, upon the resolution I had formed,

I was

LADY WOODFORD. 13

I was ready to die with regret, so cutting was my repentance.

I opened my mouth, several times, to tell the servant that I could not see him, but shut it before I had courage enough to pronounce words so foreign to my heart.

The servant, during this conflict in my breast, waited : to make it more acute, my lord, himself, whose pardon I could have, prostrate at his feet, implored, for having occasioned any the slightest uneasiness to him, waited for an answer. Yet, when I reflected on Lady Woodford's kind regard for me, on the real injury I should do to her family, by encouraging my lord to make her unhappy on my account ; when I considered that I should do my Lord the greatest harm by not endeavouring to crush an inclination which would, if carried too far, expose him to ridicule ; when I considered

considered that by acting in such a manner, as to wound his peace, I should only make myself doubly disagreeable in the end, I resolved to stifle my most earnest wishes to see him : I resolved to keep my promise to Lady Woodford inviolate.—I bade the servant tell my lord, that I was very sorry not to have it in my power to wait upon him in the parlour : adding, that I could see nobody.

As soon as the servant was gone from me with that message, I would have given the world to recall it. I threw myself back in the chair, covered my face with my handkerchief, and gave a free course to my tears.

A moment's recollection, however, roused me. I fancied that my lord would not readily take a denial : and well knowing my own weakness; well knowing that if I saw him, and listened
to

LADY WOODFORD. 15

to him, my best resolves would melt away immediately, I rose hastily, and not only bolted the chamber-door, but ran into a closet in the farthest part of the room, and fastened my myself in, that I might not hear his enchanting voice.

I staid in the closet till I imagined he had left the house: then ringing the bell, I desired the servant to tell Mrs. Stevens that I should be glad of her company.

She came directly. I asked her, if she had seen Lord Woodford.

She answered in the affirmative.

"I do not press you to tell me what he said," replied I, "but I should be glad to hear that he is quite recovered."

"He is pretty well," said she, "considering all things; and now, my dear Fanny," continued she, "let me bestow all the praises on you, which you, certainly, deserve. Never did any woman
"man

“man conduct herself with more discretion than you have done in an affair which required uncommon prudence.”

“Do not lavish encomiums on me, dear Mrs. Stevens,” cried I: “so little am I satisfied with my behaviour upon this trying occasion, that I heartily wish I could recall what is past. How could I, who have been so generously, so tenderly, so respectfully treated by Lord Woodford; how could I refuse to see him? And the first time he came abroad too after his illness, an illness which I had, most probably, occasioned! Was ever any behaviour more unkind, more ungrateful, more inhumane?”

“We are sometimes, indeed,” replied Mrs. Stevens, “obliged to make use of desperate remedies; desperate cases demand them: the loss of a limb is by no means desirable, but to preserve
“life,

LADY WOODFORD. 17

“ life, who would not submit to an am-
putation ?”

I sighed, but made no answer: I could not bear the stinging reflections which crowded into my mind. I wished, very sincerely, to make Lord Woodford *some* amends for the ungrateful part I had acted. At last, I recollected that I had never promised not to write to him. I, therefore, determined to write immediately : and as soon as Mrs. Stevens left me, took up my pen.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of
Woodford.

THE numberless favours conferred upon a poor, friendless girl, by the most humane, the most generous of men, required very different returns
from

from her, than those which he has received.—How was it possible for her to refuse to see her amiable benefactor!—Yes, my Lord, I refused to see you, I shut the door against you: but when your lordship is acquainted with the motives, by which I was actuated, my conduct, which has, doubtless, appeared to you highly exceptionable, will, I flatter myself, be rather applauded than condemned.—But as I cannot exculpate myself from the charge of ingratitude, so reasonably to be levelled at me by your lordship, without unfolding the inmost recesses of my heart, I must intreat your Lordship's particular attention.

When you left me, my Lord, to go to Derbyshire, the violence of my affection—pardon the expression—made me very restless, and unhappy; your absence excluded felicity from my bosom.—I
never

never considered, indeed, that of all people I had the least reason to imagine you would be always with me. Yet, as you had kindly permitted me to enjoy many hours of your entertaining company, I repined at being deprived of it, even while you went to visit your relations.—I was soon punished for my presumption. Lady Woodford, provoked, no doubt, to find that an insignificant creature, engaged so much of your time; and concluding, very naturally, from appearances, that I was a girl as destitute of virtue, as I am of friends, came and convinced me of my erroneous behaviour, in giving the world room, by living at your Lordship's expence, to believe that I really was the character they supposed me to be.—And as your connection, with a person apparently criminal, necessarily alarmed

Lady

Lady Woodford, she came to me to inform herself thoroughly of all that had passed between us.—I am sure she felt the sincerest pleasure, a truly maternal satisfaction, to find that she had been mistaken, and that Lord Woodford had not made the slightest attempt to seduce the girl whom he had nobly, and generously, taken under his protection.—But, my Lord, tho' my virtue has not been violated, my character is irretrievably lost: and can Lord Woodford, in opposition to his worthy family, regardless of the duty and affection which he owes to the best of mothers, regardless too of his own honour and future peace, think of making an indiscreet alliance with a poor friendless girl?—*That* girl is too honest to suffer him to act with so much imprudence.—No, my Lord, my respect, my esteem, let me add—for I can

can add it without a blush—my affection for you operate sufficiently to hinder me from consenting to your ruin.—I have reason to love you, my Lord; I *do* love you; I am not afraid to tell you so.—I can, indeed, in no other way, express my gratitude for the numberless proofs I have received of your generosity and regard for me.—I should be covered with shame did I not love you, and I will never consent to your injuring yourself, or offending your family, by encouraging the smallest hope for an union which would make your relations wretched, lessen you in their eyes, at the same time, and put it out of your power to shew that compassion and tenderness, which are due to the amiable daughter of Lady Woodford's friend, who, from her birth and good qualities, from her discernment in perceiving every

virtue

virtue in you, deserves your tenderest attentions.—Think no more, therefore, my lord, of a girl who ought to have no pretensions to a nearer connection with you, because she never can be worthy of it—Should you, from emotions of pity or love, ever have thought seriously about her, it is incumbent on her to make a vigorous resistance to your designs; as your honour will be tarnished, your happiness destroyed, by the execution of them. Forget me, my lord.—Suffer me, however, to declare how very grateful I am for all the unmerited favours you have conferred on me—To the last moment of my life, my wishes, my prayers will be for your felicity.

I am, my lord,

Your lordship's most obliged

Humble servant,

F. OSGOOD.

After

After having read over the above letter several times, and as often resolved to tear it to pieces, not thinking that I had expressed the sentiments of my heart in a proper manner. I at last determined to dispatch it: but I was at a loss to know by whose hands I should convey it to him. As I did not wish to have recourse to any clandestine proceedings, I applied to Mrs. Stevens: I acquainted her with the purport of my letter, and desired her advice.

She hesitated for some moments; at length she told me, that if my letter really contained nothing but what I had related to her, she would assist me in the conveyance of it. "If you propose," added she; "to carry on a correspondence with my Lord, I will have no concern in the affair."

I assured her, that her apprehensions were

were entirely groundless; recollecting, however, that my lord might, possibly, entertain conjectures similar to Mrs. Stevens's, or might seize an opportunity to correspond with me, I added a postscript, fearful of consequences, and intreated his lordship not to think of making a reply to a letter which required no answer, as I had determined to give him no farther trouble in *that*, or in any other way.

When I had sealed my letter Mrs. Stevens sent her own maid Kitty with it.

Kitty was a sensible woman, about eight and twenty, or thirty, and had always treated me with great respect; and had always discovered an affectionate readiness to wait on me.

When she had been absent above two hours, her mistress and I began to wonder at her stay: I concluded that Lady Woodford

Woodford had intercepted my letter : I knew indeed that there was nothing in it unfit for her perusal, I fancied she might detain it from her son. I confess, that I was miserable, about the delivery of it. I very much wished to have him receive from me an apology for my conduct which had, undoubtedly, given him pain, obliging him to harbour an ill opinion of me; I had, it is true, so far conquered my inclination as to resolve to take no steps to promote my own happiness at the expence of *his* honour ; yet I did not think there was any necessity for me to render myself odious to him.

The various reflections which followed each other, in a quick succession in my mind, drove composure from it.—Kitty's return, tho' most welcome was her appearance, threw me into a violent

agitation. She returned with a letter in her hand from Lord Woodford.

An answer from *him* was a blessing I had not expected. Great was the flutter of my spirits upon the occasion; but my sensations were rather pleasing than painful.

I snatched the letter eagerly from Kitty's hand, and while I was so employed, *felt* that I should never obtain a victory over the tender passion which had taken possession of my heart.

When I had seized the letter, I could not help earnestly examining Kitty's face, to see if I could find out, in her features, what had passed, relating to *me*, at Lord Woodford's. *She*, at the same time, looked as if she had a great deal to communicate, but was unwilling to hinder me from reading the reply she had brought me.

As

LADY WOODFORD. 27

As Mrs. Stevens had quitted the room, and as I thought I might not have, *that* day, another opportunity to speak to Kitty in private, I rose, and, having fastened my chamber-door, to prevent interruption, said to her, "How came you by this letter, Kitty?"

"My lord gave it me, madam;" replied she.

"You saw him then—how does he look? What did he say?"

Eagerly were those questions articulated.

"He looked pale, and very much out of order, madam, when I was first admitted to him, but he grew better before I came away."

This particular reply excited my curiosity, and I desired her to relate every thing that had passed; she gratified it in the following words:

“ When I delivered your letter to my
“ lord’s gentleman, whom they called
“ Mr. Cowley ; he asked me from whom
“ I came. I told him that the letter
“ would inform his lordship.—Undoubt-
“ edly it will, said he ; but, as my
“ lord will ask me the same question, I
“ would rather be able to give him the
“ demanded information immediately.
“ —I come from Miss Osgood, replied
“ I.—He looked pleased, I thought, at
“ the mention of your name ; he then
“ conducted me into a parlour, and de-
“ fired me to sit down ; he then took
“ the letter, and went up stairs. He re-
“ turned in a moment with the letter un-
“ opened, and said that my lord bade
“ me take it back.—I looked disap-
“ pointed, madam,” continued the good
“ natured girl—“ because I knew what
“ you would feel. I was very unwilling
“ to leave the house before my lord had
“ opened

“ opened the letter, and yet I judged it
 “ was not *my* place to say any thing.—
 “ Mr. Cowley seemed to be as much
 “ dissatisfied as I was; at least I ima-
 “ gined so, and I was therefore still
 “ more desirous of speaking. I thought,
 “ indeed, at the same time, that I ought
 “ not to take such a liberty, and yet I
 “ could not bring myself to leave the
 “ house. I lingered, and cast my eyes,
 “ first on the letter, and then on Mr.
 “ Cowley, who appeared to be in no
 “ hurry to part with me.—While we
 “ both stood, undetermined as it were,
 “ how to act, a violent ringing made
 “ Mr. Cowley hurry up stairs. He stayed
 “ some time, and I resolved not to stir
 “ till he came down again.—At last I
 “ heard two people upon the stairs, and
 “ soon afterwards somebody cried, in a
 “ peevish voice, and in a hasty manner,

“Where is she?”—“Here, my lord,”
“replied Mr. Cowley, opening the par-
“lour-door.—I then saw my lord: he
“came in with a disordered countenance.
“From whom do you come?” said he,
“from Miss Osgood, answered I, hold-
“ing out the letter, and longed to add
“something to make him open it, but I
“was afraid you would be angry.—
“’Tis very well, said he, with a kind of
“affected haughtiness, “I have nothing
“to say to Miss Osgood; you may tell
“her so.”—He then turned his back,
“and was going to leave the room.
“There was no time to lose, and there-
“fore I hastened to say, I shall be sorry,
“my lord, to carry Miss Osgood such an
“answer from your lordship; I am sure
“it will hurt her prodigiously, and her
“spirits are very low at present. He
“looked earnestly at me, rather sternly,
“at

“ at my impertinence, I suppose : he
 “ then took three or four turns, hastily,
 “ up and down the room, but as he had
 “ not commanded me to depart, I re-
 “ mained standing in a respectful man-
 “ ner, with the letter in my hand. At
 “ length, turning short upon me, “ There
 “ must be some mistake, child, said he,
 “ Miss Osgood can have nothing to say
 “ to me : I am but lately come from her
 “ house, and she refused to see me ;
 “ therefore you are, I tell you, under a
 “ mistake.”—I believe *not*, my lord, re-
 “ plied I, and I fancy your lordship will
 “ find very satisfactory reasons for her
 “ behaviour in this letter.—“ You are,
 “ then, acquainted with the contents of
 “ it ?” said he, in a milder tone.—No,
 “ my lord ; but I know Miss Osgood too
 “ well to believe that she would do any
 “ thing your lordship does not approve
 “ of,

“ of, without being able to give a good
“ reason for it.—A half smile rose in my
“ lord’s face—“ Miss Osgood is obliging
“ to *you*, I suppose, or you would not
“ speak so warmly in her praise.” She
“ is good to every body, my lord, re-
“ plied I, with whom she has any thing
“ to do; every body who knows her
“ must love her.—My lord turned
“ away his face, and fetched a deep
“ sigh; then, advancing briskly towards
“ me, said, “ Come, give me the letter:
“ I will open it, since you say there is an
“ apology for her conduct in it.”—He
“ broke the seals in a hurry; his hands
“ trembled; he changed colour while he
“ read, lifted up his eyes three or four
“ times, took out his handkerchief, and
“ wiped his face: then, turning to me
“ again, “ I am obliged to you, said he;
“ pray sit down, and accept of this for
“ your

“ your trouble,” putting a guinea into
 “ my hand—“ tell me your name, child,
 “ and stay till I have written an answer.
 “ I curtsied and thanked him; but, be-
 “ lieve me, madam, I was a thousand
 “ times more pleased at his promising to
 “ answer your letter, than with the mo-
 “ ney he gave me.”

Here Kitty stopped: I was extremely impatient to read the letter she had brought for me, yet I wished, with not a little eagerness, to be acquainted with every particular circumstance relating to my lord's behaviour.

“ He went up, madam,” continued Kitty, “ and staid about half an hour, during which, Mr. Cowley came in and chatted with me : he told me, that he was glad to hear me say, I had been sent by Miss Osgood, because he was well assured, that his lordship was very

“unhappy upon *her* account; adding,
 “that he was so good a master, all his
 “servants were sorry to see him uneasy,
 “and wished he never might have a
 “worse lady.—We were then interrup-
 “ted by the arrival of my lord, with a
 “letter in his hand; he desired me to
 “carry it to you, gave me another
 “guinea, and was very inquisitive about
 “your health, intreating me to take the
 “greatest care of you, and bidding
 “Cowley to let me out.”

This account, you may be sure, could
 not be disagreeable to me: I thanked
 Kitty for her care and attention, pro-
 mised never to forget her, and told her
 also, that I was glad my lord had so
 handsomely rewarded her, for her readi-
 ness to be serviceable to me.

She made many grateful acknowledg-
 ments, and left me to open my letter.—

I un-

I unfolded it immediately, and read the following lines;

To Miss Osgood.

AFTER the racking disquietude which I have endured on account of *your* absence, my dear Fanny, what transports do I feel on finding that you still love me, and that it is to your love alone, I am to attribute the behaviour which raised a little resentment, I own, in me; but you have, by acquainting me with your motives, removed it. Enamoured as I was with you, how could I bear to be dismissed from you, and in a manner too which induced me to believe that you had quite given me up?—Your dear letter, though it was some time before I could prevail on myself to open it,

gave a new turn to my ideas, filled me with new sensations, and fixed you the sovereign mistress of my heart.—Yes, Fanny, you are my soul's supreme joy, and I am now more firmly attached to you than ever.—Your many excellent qualities first recommended you to my attention; and they are, indeed, sufficient to over-balance all your deficiencies with regard to rank and fortune. No longer, therefore, imagine that the superiority on *my* side renders me blind to your inestimable merit: compared with the virtues by which you are so eminently distinguished, rank and fortune are of no consideration: no longer persist in refusing the son to flatter the pride of the mother, the only failing she ever discovered.—Time, my Fanny, and a farther acquaintance with you will, I dare aver, reconcile her to an alliance,

con-

concerning which she is, at present, so much disturbed. Do not, my dearest girl, suppose that I will ever forsake you: be assured you are absolutely necessary to my happiness; be assured also, that I only wait for the completion of it, till I can prevail on my mother to consent, with a good grace, to a measure which will, I am persuaded, constitute *her* felicity, as well as ensure *mine*. Some people cannot, without much difficulty, be brought to approve of the very measures by which their own happiness would be promoted: such people must be managed with address; the removal of their prejudices must be artfully, and gradually attempted: and you may depend upon my taking the steps most likely to succeed, for the extinction of all the little narrow notions cherished by Lady Woodford, which make her so averse

averse to an alliance with you.—With pleasure shall I undertake the task, and I am sanguine enough to hope I shall prove successful.—Think no more, then, my dearest girl, of giving me up; nor call yourself friendless: I am, and ever will be, your sincere friend, your fond, your faithful lover. Do not deny yourself any reasonable indulgence that your fortune will admit of, for you are fairly entitled to the annual sum of three hundred pounds; and that sum you shall regularly receive in four quarterly payments, and you may reside wherever you please. However, if Mrs. Stevens, with whom I am acquainted, behaves with propriety, and makes herself agreeable to you, had you not better remain with *her*, than leave her to live with strangers? From her, since you actually, prohibit a correspondence between us, for the present,

LADY WOODFORD. 39

sent, I can sometimes hear about your health. * My mother, also, will, in all probability, be more pleased with your continuance with her friend, as she will, by your remaining with her, have an opportunity to see and hear with what discretion you conduct yourself: your discretion will, doubtless, have great weight with her, and render her the more ready to compleat our happiness: I say *our* happiness, because I still flatter myself that my dear Fanny can taste no real felicity without

Her ever sincere,

And affectionate

WOODFORD.

It

It is not possible for me, my dear friend, to tell you into what transports of delight this letter threw me.—I read it over and over several times with fresh satisfaction; a satisfaction as solid, as it was pure: I had all the reason in the world to believe, from this letter, that my lord would reserve himself for *me*; I, therefore, thought I had nothing to do but to wait for him with patience, and to endeavour to behave in such a manner, as to win his mother to my interest, whenever I happened to see her.

Lady Woodford called on me now and then; and brought me, one day, a fifty pound note.

“Fanny,” said she, with a good humoured smile, “do you want money?”
 “I promised, you know, to supply
 “you.”

“I thank

"I thank you, madam," replied I,
 "but I cannot spend what I have, in the
 "manner I live."

"What do you mean, child?" cried
 she, with a look full of surprize.

"I cannot spend three hundred a year,
 without being very extravagant."

"Three hundred a year!"

"You know, madam, that my lord
 "settled that sum upon me for my
 "life."

"Yes; but you forget that I told you
 "that no young woman could honour-
 "ably be subsisted by a man, without
 "being married to him.—You agreed to
 "my sentiments, at the time I acquainted
 "you with them, and I, therefore, really
 "imagined that you had rejected any
 "farther assistance from my son."

I looked abashed, but replied, "That
 "as I had not seen my lord since, I had

"not

“not met with an opportunity to inform him of my thoughts upon that subject.”

“There is no occasion for your seeing him,” answered she, eagerly; “you have only to refuse the acceptance of any money from him, when it is offered to you: there is no other way for you to get rid of a gift which is forced upon you against your inclination:—A gift you will no longer want, as I shall amply provide for you till you are married. Gordon, with whom I am acquainted, tells me that you do not like him; I am sorry you have an aversion to him, as he is young, agreeable, and very suitable to you.”

I made my acknowledgments to her ladyship in the most respectful terms, for her good wishes, but assured her, that I had no thoughts of marrying.

“I hope

"I hope you do not still think of my son," added she, hastily.

"Not improperly, my lady," answered I, with my face glowing like fire.

I believe she did not much like that reply. Having again insisted upon my not receiving any farther supplies from my lord, she left the bank note with me, and went away.

For some time I heard nothing of my lord; I longed to know something about him. Yet I never mentioned him to Mrs. Stevens, nor yet to Kitty by way of enquiring after him.

My life was a very dull one.—The day rose, the night came with indifference: the hours crept heavily along; nothing gave a chearful turn to my ideas. I still, secretly, pined for lord Woodford's society: I found Mrs. Stevens to be a good sort of woman, indeed, but a dream-

dreaming companion. She saw, I fancy, that we were not in the least entertaining to each other: the discovery, however, did not raise any emotions of disgust in her against me.—Her behaviour, in consequence of it, strongly evinced the natural sweetness of her disposition.

While I was in this situation, winter arrived. During a little conversation, one evening, about diversions, Mrs. Stevens laid down her work—we were both engaged with our needles—and looking earnestly at me said, “You have, “undoubtedly, seen several plays? Which “do you like best, tragedies or comedies?”

I told her, that I could not answer that question properly, as I had not seen either the one or the other.

“No?” cried she, “we will go then “the next time Garrick acts.”

I made

I made but a slight reply—I was quite indifferent about it. However, she overpersuaded me, and we took a coach, one night, to Drury-lane. Her intention was to sit in the gallery, that she might not be known, but as the house was full before our arrival, and as we could not, possibly, think of getting a place, but by pushing thro' a monstrous crowd, which quite frightened me, we were going to return to our coach, to the great mortification of Mrs. Stevens—when we met a gentleman very handsomely, but not full dressed, who had all the appearance of a man of fashion. He fixed his eyes on *me*, tho' my hat was pretty much over my face, and said, “Is there no room, ladies?”

“None, Sir, replied Mrs. Stevens; at least, we dare not venture to see if there is any.”

“To

“To what part of the house do you wish to go?” said he, with eagerness.

“To the gallery,” replied Mrs. Stevens.

“The gallery must, undoubtedly, be full,” said he, “but I dare say I can get you into one of the green-boxes.”

Mrs. Stevens hesitated. She looked at *me*. I was equally ignorant and indifferent about the green-boxes; I was quite indifferent, indeed, about the play itself.

The gentleman, seeing her embarrassed, said, “While you are hesitating, madam, you will lose every opportunity: give me leave to assist you.”

I happened to be nearest to him: he took my hand: my countenance discovered how little desirous I was of taking any step to procure what so many were toiling to obtain, but as Mrs. Stevens

in-

intreated me to go on, I permitted him to drag me through the crowd, altogether inattentive to every thing. At last we seated ourselves very commodiously in one of the above-mentioned boxes. The gentleman placed Mrs. Stevens on one side of me, and himself on the other. She reached over me several times to make him acknowledgments for the trouble he had taken: during the articulation of those acknowledgments I sat silent, being inclined to look at the house, and to observe the company, &c. &c. My conductor, surprised at my silence, said, at length, "Sure, madam, Mr. Garrick
 "is not happy enough to rank you a-
 "mong his numerous admirers, as you
 "shew no desire to give your attention
 "to a man, for the sight of whom upon
 "the stage, thousands take an infinite
 "deal of pains."

As

“As I never saw Mr. Garrick, Sir,
 “my easiness about him is not to be
 “wondered at.”

He gave his assent to that answer, adding, “That he should receive a great
 “deal of satisfaction, in taking notice of
 “the pleasure which the appearance of
 “so masterly an actor would afford me,
 “and that he should ever think himself
 “uncommonly happy in having been,
 “in the slightest degree, instrumental to
 “so much delight.”

I was silent. The curtain drew up.
 The play was *Jane Shore*.—Never, I believe, was any creature more interested in any theatrical performance.—I felt the force of every line almost as keen as if real scenes had been presented to my view. I was particularly affected by the misery which *Jane Shore* had brought upon herself, by yielding to a commerce
 which

LADY WOODFORD. 49

which I plainly saw, could not be enjoyed or defended, as virtue was not the foundation of it. Alicia's ravings filled me with horror, but as her distraction was occasioned by her outrageous jealousy, on finding her infamous pleasures interrupted, her ravings did not touch me so much as the penitential effusions of the unhappy *Jane*. I felt her exquisite distress the more strongly, by considering that I might have been in the same dangerous situation, by living with the man whom I loved. The performance of this play made me shudder to think of what had passed relating to myself. I wept myself almost blind, regardless of every body about me: tho' the gentleman who had taken so much pains to place me, seemed to attach himself entirely to me. He applauded my sensibility, but while he bestowed encomiums upon

it, he discovered some fears lest I should, by giving way to my tears, make my head ache.

I assured him, though I had shed a great many tears in my life, I had never perfectly known till then what was meant by a luxury of sorrow.

He looked at me, as soon as I had uttered those few words, as if he had never seen a human creature before: he appeared to be, at once, astonished and delighted; yet he shewed both with such a delicacy, that I could not, justly, be offended at his behaviour.

When the play was over, he carefully handed us out, procured us a coach, and begged he might be permitted to call and ask us how we did sometimes.

His request was addressed to us both with his lips, but his looks were directed to me alone.

Mrs.

LADY WOODFORD. 51

Mrs. Stevens hesitated again.

“My name is Sheffield,” continued he; “I live in Pall-Mall, and hope to have the honour to see you at my house when we are better acquainted.”

Mrs. Stevens, who had not appeared to be quite easy with our new friend, began to brighten up at this intelligence. While we were going home, she said, “How remarkably lucky we have been in falling into such good hands! Mr. Sheffield has an exceeding good fortune, and is of a good family.”

“I thought you told me just now,” replied I drily, “that you did not know him.”

“I did *not* know him,” answered she, “till he mentioned his name; and then I presently recollected that I had heard a hundred handsome things of him, tho’ I had never seen him before.

Mr. Sheffield, however, was laid aside, and our conversation turned upon the play which had, indeed, so totally engaged my thoughts, that I could not attend to Mrs. Stevens upon any other subject.

The next day Mr. Sheffield made his appearance: he had an elegant person, an easy and polite address: he seemed to be perfectly acquainted with the world, yet there was a pleasing simplicity in his manners, which is infinitely more attractive than that parade with which some pompous people endeavour to prejudice you in favour of their understandings. He conversed upon many entertaining subjects, and chiefly addressed himself to me, without affecting to make me sensible that I particularly engaged his attention. After a pretty long first visit he left

left us, but invited himself to drink tea with us the following day.

He came; and the time passed away very pleasantly, because his conversation was sprightly, and amusing: his whole behaviour too was so entirely unrestrained, that we conversed with him as freely as if he had been an acquaintance, or rather an intimate friend. Next to Lord Woodford, he was the most agreeable man I had ever met with. I did not, however, acquaint Mrs. Stevens with my private opinion of him.

Lady Woodford called again to see me—for some time we were not by ourselves: she treated me with more tenderness than usual. I asked no questions about my lord, but I concluded, from her cheerfulness, that he was well. She was, I found, still more pleased with me

on account of my forbearing to mention him.

Soon after *her* departure, Mr. Sheffield came in. He brought me some new books of the tender kind; yet they were genteel, moral, and entertaining. From *that* time he continued to supply me with every new production fit for my perusal, as soon as it was published. This polite carriage of his naturally produced an intimacy between us; an intimacy much desired, apparently, by him, and, I confess, not disagreeable to me. Deprived of Lord Woodford's conversation, I had not met with any person whose society was in the least suitable to my taste, till Mr. Sheffield fell under my notice. I could not help seeing that he was partial to me, yet in no shape was the lover visible.—Mr. Sheffield was studiously assiduous to make himself agreeable

able to me in every respect, and I treated him in the manner I thought he deserved, like a well-bred man, who was of an obliging disposition, and who would be disappointed if his endeavours to please had not been handsomely received. Lord Woodford was the sole possessor of my heart, but Mr. Sheffield was entitled to a considerable share of my esteem.

By this kind of behaviour on both sides, our familiarity increased. We chatted upon the books he lent me; some of them were dramatic, and naturally gave rise to reflections on the stage. He frequently told me how much he was surprised that I, with so true a taste for theatrical representations—those were his flattering expressions—went not oftener to see them. “Tho’ indeed,” added he, one day, “if every tragedy affects

“you as *Jane Shore* did, I don’t know
 “whether, out of a regard for your health,
 “I ought to wish you to be present at
 “many exhibitions in the tragic style.”

I answered with a freedom to which
 my growing intimacy with him had, im-
 perceptibly, accustomed me.—“Every
 “tragedy, I suppose, Sir, is not so deep
 “as that I saw the other night.”

“There are many tragedies in our
 “language, with different fables, and
 “full as affecting,” replied he.

“To *me*, Sir, there cannot, I am sure,
 “be a more interesting tragedy than
 “that which I have already seen. A
 “woman, whose peace of mind is de-
 “stroyed by her having given the reins
 “to a tender passion, is a pitiable object;
 “and she excites one’s pity still more,
 “if the ill-treatment she meets with
 “from her seducer, not only fills her
 “with

"with the most cutting remorse, but
 "drives her to distraction."

I believe I coloured while I spoke those words: I, certainly, felt disconcerted.

"You speak feelingly, Miss Osgood," said he; "but I will allow that the object you have mentioned is truly deserving of compassion: every man of the least sensibility must be affected with *Alicia's* situation;—and yet," added he, after a little pause, "a woman who has never been in *her* situation, need not, methinks, feel upon the occasion more than such a man."

"A woman," replied I, with my face still in a glow, "who has been in danger, cannot but sigh at another's ruin, tho' she may exult, at the same time, at her own escape."

"Are *you* that woman?" said he, tenderly. "Pardon me, Miss Osgood; I do

“not intend to be impertinent, but I
“feel myself concerned in every thing
“relating to you.”

As I looked upon this speech only as
an effusion of gallantry, I replied, “Most
“women, Sir, have, I suppose, been in
“some parts of their lives thrown into
“trying situations, and when I hear of
“the sufferings of any of *my* sex, for an
“indiscreet confidence in any of *yours*, I
“shudder to think of the precipice from
“which I have been, providentially,
“saved.”

He looked at me very earnestly, anxiously, indeed, while I spoke, and then said, “A woman cannot be in a trying
“situation, unless she loves the man
“who studies to insinuate himself into
“her favour; in that case, ’tis true,
“little resistance is to be expected.”

I told

I told him that I was of his opinion, and that no woman could be in danger if she was not too sensible of her lover's merit, or the constancy of his attachment to her.

"You have, doubtless, been sensible of such an attachment," cried he, eagerly, "or you could not speak so feelingly upon the subject."

This reply was too home; it embarrassed me extremely: however I had address enough to extricate myself out of the perplexity in which I was involved, by saying, that when a conversation became particular, we were prevented from delivering our thoughts with freedom.

"I stand corrected, madam," answered he, with a graceful bow; "but tho' I may have been guilty of a piece of impertinence, it is my sincere wish ne-

“ ver to give you a moment’s disquiet.—
 “ I wish, indeed, most ardently, to
 “ have it in *my* power to increase your
 “ felicity, hopeless as I am of ever
 “ having my wishes gratified.”

The entrance of Mrs. Stevens put an end to this conversation, though it occasioned a slight change, I thought, in Mr. Sheffield’s countenance, and behaviour. He looked more serious, he appeared more restless, more dissatisfied than usual. As the change I observed in him, however, did not affect *me*, I only amused myself with his assiduities about me, and his numberless little efforts to give me pleasure.—Finding that I began to grow grave, he proposed a party to a comedy, in order to make me chearful.—

“ Comedies,” said he, “ are moral pieces
 “ as well as tragedies, and they are more
 “ agreeable: in them, if well written,

“ we

LADY WOODFORD. 61

“ we see vice and folly satirized as they
“ ought to be. Among our first rate
“ comedies, the *Conscious Lovers* may be
“ reckoned, though I think there are
“ many exceptionable parts in it; yet I
“ believe you will be pleased at the re-
“ presentation of it.”

Mrs. Stevens, who sat by, and who was very fond of plays, spoke so highly of the last-mentioned piece, that Mr. Sheffield redoubled his persuasions to induce me to go to it, and nothing remained to be settled but the part of the house in which we were to be seated.

“ We must sit either in the side-boxes,
“ or green-boxes,” said Mr. Sheffield.

I, immediately, declared for the least public situation.

Turning to me, with a very particular look, he said, “ Why should so much
“ beauty be concealed? You have not
“ the

“ the smallest share of the vanity of
“ your sex, or you have very singular
“ reasons for hiding a person which must
“ give the highest pleasure to all who
“ behold it.”

I received this compliment merely as a compliment, and the sound of it died away as soon as I had heard it.— However, Mr. Sheffield, finding that I chose the green-boxes, sent directly to secure places; and only begged that I would condescend to go without a hat or bonnet.

This request was, I thought, an odd one; but as Mrs. Stevens joined with him, I complied, though against my inclination, and my judgment.

Mr. Sheffield's chariot carried Mrs. Stevens and me.—A chair had taken *him* first, that he might be ready to assist us in getting to our places.

As

As I had not now the appearance of a spot entirely new to me to dissipate my attention, I listened to the entertaining chat of Mr. Sheffield with much satisfaction; and as he had a very good taste in musick, I applauded those pieces which seemed to strike him most: by so doing, I pleased him not a little: I never saw him in such spirits. The conversations between Bevil and Indiana soon became so interesting, that I was all ear to them: I fancied Bevil Lord Woodford, and Indiana myself. Their distresses were, to me, still more affecting than those of *Jane Shore* (though really infinitely inferior to them) because they seemed to be similar to my own.

I was, certainly, as poor as Indiana; I was as deeply in love, I had depended as much upon my lover, and was as doubtful whether I should ever be united

to him.—In one respect, indeed, I was happier than Indiana: *she* was distracted with apprehensions with regard to her lover's affection for her, but *I* was blest in knowing that Lord Woodford *had* loved me, and in believing that he loved me, at that instant, as tenderly as ever.

While I was thus employed in drawing comparisons between myself and the heroine of the play, Mr. Sheffield made an observation which occasioned me to turn my head in order to answer him, as it was particularly worthy of my notice. On turning round, I saw Lord Woodford. He was behind me, leaning forward to hear what I said, not being very near me.

The moment he caught my eyes, he drew back with an air of inconceivable disgust, and disdain.

Having

LADY WOODFORD. 65

Having felt the most agreeable surprise, the liveliest joy, the tenderest emotions at the sight of him, I was so struck at the sudden, and discouraging alteration in his features, that I became as pale as death.

Sheffield, who had closely watched me, immediately seized my hand, pressed it tenderly, and asked me if I was not well, taking out of his pocket, at the same time, an *eau de luce* bottle, and offering it to me; for my lord's indifference had so much affected me, that I was ready to faint.

On my making no reply, he grew extremely officious.—I was not capable of making any resistance to his attentions, but my eyes were perpetually wandering in search of my lord, who left the box with precipitation. I, then, unable to attend to any thing, grew very
un-

uneasy. My lord, by his departure, without speaking to me, without taking the least notice of me, pierced my heart. I could no longer suppress the torturing emotions which I endured, yet was afraid of making them publick.—The conflict was so severe, that I absolutely fainted in Mr. Sheffield's arms. *He*, whose vigilance was excessive, caught me, and saved me from falling. A few slight exclamations of surprize and concern uttered by him, and Mrs. Stevens, upon the occasion, brought back my lord, I suppose, for when I opened my eyes, I saw, while I rested on Sheffield's bosom, my lord, nearer to me than he was before: yet, instead of advancing to assist me, instead of expressing the least concern at my indisposition, he frowned, bit his lips, and looked with a kind of gloomy sulkiness which made me tremble, beginning to
move

move towards the box-door a second time.—His feet were directed towards the door; his eyes were still fixed on *me*, but his looks afforded me no satisfaction, for he appeared to be greatly disturbed, and exceedingly displeased with me.—Unable, at last, to support his neglect, weak, and half-recovered as I was, unable to let him go from me, without endeavouring to learn the cause of his cruel behaviour, I raised my languid head, and with a faltering voice, said, while my heart was almost rent asunder, “Will
“you not speak to me, my lord?”

Instead of making the reply which I expected, he turned, hastily, from me, and, again, quitted the box.

This was too much: I was not only severely disappointed, I was also overwhelmed with affliction.—I exclaimed,

in agony, "He is lost—gone for ever—
"I am undone."

Mr. Sheffield, who began to grow extremely anxious about me, said, with a great deal of tenderness in his manner, that it would be better for me, as I was so uneasy, to leave the house.

I readily closed with his proposal.—I was, indeed, very much disordered—I was more like a mad woman, than a rational being, and when I asked myself, while we were going home, whether I ought to be so afflicted on my Lord's account, as I had given him up; my heart replied, that I had never meant, by giving him up, to offend him, but to do him a real service, for which he ought rather to esteem me more than ever. Besides, had he not told me in his answer to my letter, that I should *not* give him up? had he not assured me, that he
would

would ever be my friend, and lover? and was his behaviour to me at our meeting, after so long an absence, when I appeared to be dying, dying in consequence of his chilling neglect, the behaviour of even a friend?

Such were my reflexions while I was in Mr. Sheffield's chariot with Mrs. Stevens, who asked me twenty questions in a breath, and said that it was a pity I had not been able to conceal the disturbance I felt at the unexpected appearance of my lord, in so publick a place. "But I hope," continued she, "as you have now been treated by him in so mortifying a manner, you will think no more about him; and I am very sure you may do as well, if not better, in another place."

I made no reply to this jargon, for so I considered it.—I could only answer her
with

with my sighs, and with tears, which flowed fast; so fast, that I was scarce able to see Mr. Sheffield, when he came to the side of the carriage on its stopping, who lifted me out.—When he had conducted me into the house, he placed me on a sofa, sat down by me, and taking my hand, intreated me to endeavour to compose myself, if possible, as he was certain, that by immoderate grief, I should injure my health. “ Besides,” added he, “ you are not yet sure that
“ you have reason to be so uneasy: appearances, on all sides, are deceitful: I
“ will not intrude upon your hour of
“ retiring to night, as you have been so
“ much fluttered, but I shall hope, to-morrow, when you are a little more
“ calm, to be able to offer some consolation to you; to weaken the weight of
“ your

LADY WOODFORD. 71

“ your sorrow, if not entirely to re-
“ move it.”

This was, indeed, the voice of comfort: I greedily availed myself of it; I intreated him to remain with me, as I could not think of taking any rest, and to communicate what he had to disclose before his departure for the evening. I could not, however, prevail on him to stay with me.—“ Only be composed,” replied he, pressing my hand; “ you are
“ distressed at Lord Woodford’s beha-
“ viour.—You think him changed with
“ regard to you.—Now I, too plainly,
“ perceive that he is *not*. You may be
“ assured that he loves you more than
“ ever. A man never thinks it worth
“ his while to be angry with a woman
“ who is an object of indifference in his
“ eyes—I cannot enter into particulars
“ to night—only give credit to this as-
“ surance



“ surance of mine ; if you find me mistaken, never believe me again.”

With these words he hurried towards the door.—Pale and red, alternately, astonished at what he had just declared, and impatient to come to an explanation, trembling too, from terror and despair, fain would I have detained him by the hand with which he held mine, but he broke from me, though he seemed to discover a melancholy kind of pleasure, at the same time, at my wishing him to stay with me : I should not have been so desirous of the continuance of his company, had I not hoped to hear Lord Woodford’s extraordinary conduct accounted for, though I could not help wondering at his being able to explain it.—Mr. Sheffield’s conversation was, in truth, so much more soothing and satisfactory than Mrs. Stevens’s, that I almost wished to put him

him in *her* place, as he had exceedingly raised my curiosity.

Having resisted all Mrs. Stevens's solicitations, when supper came, I retired to my apartment, and spent the night in tears, which were accompanied with a thousand idle conjectures concerning my lord's carriage, and as many apologies for it.—Never did I, with so much ardor, wish for the return of morning.

I rose before any of the family were stirring, and endeavoured to compose myself sufficiently to sit down to breakfast with Mrs. Stevens. I could not, however, swallow a morsel.

Just when the breakfast things were taken away, Mr. Sheffield entered the room. Mrs. Stevens, as soon as the first compliments were over, left us together.

“ I have been very impatient to see
“ you, Sir,” said I, to him, in answer
to an enquiry after my health.

“ How flattering would that speech
“ have been,” replied he, “ did I not
“ know that your impatience was occa-
“ sioned by your curiosity with regard
“ to Lord Woodford.”

I blushed, I hung my head, and by so
doing, confessed that he was no stranger
to the emotions of my heart.—To be ho-
nest, I should have contrived to have been
absent, had not my curiosity prompted
me to have an interview with him; for
though I esteemed Mr. Sheffield, and
liked his conversation, I had not the
least idea of loving him: and I had, for
some time, fancied that he both wished,
and expected to find me very strongly
prepossessed in his favour.

“ I have

“ I have already disconcerted you,”
 said he ; “ and I fear that I have some
 “ questions to ask, which you will not be
 “ quite willing to answer ; but how can
 “ I be certain that I am right, unless
 “ you give me some directing clue ?

“ No, no,” cried I, still more embar-
 rassed, “ say every thing you think pro-
 “ per, and I will tell you if you are
 “ right afterwards.”

“ I must say, then, that I am grieved
 “ to death to be obliged to tell you,
 “ that you love lord Woodford.”

“ I am afraid my partiality for Lord
 “ Woodford has been but too clearly
 “ discovered,” replied I, colouring ex-
 cessively.

“ And it is as clear to me, that it was
 “ from the excess of love alone, he
 “ gave you the disquiet which you felt ;
 “ he was, I will venture to declare, not

“ less disquieted at the sight of you,
“ though he discovered the situation of
“ his mind in a different manner.”

“ But how is it possible that you
“ should know all this ?” answered I, in
no small confusion.

“ I know this, and much more,” re-
plied he, “ yet there are circumstances
“ with which I am not acquainted :
“ could I, however, be acquainted with
“ them, I might be serviceable to you,
“ by the disclosure of others, of which
“ you want to be informed. By fa-
“ vouring me, therefore, with the whole
“ detail of your connection with Lord
“ Woodford, you will take the surest
“ way to find out what you wish to
“ know.”

I looked down, and hesitated. I could
not bring myself to relate all my lord's
affairs, and my own, to a man with
whom

whom I had only a slight acquaintance, to a man who was not, I thought, entitled to such a confidence : but when I reflected upon the politeness, and propriety of his carriage since our first accidental meeting, I found myself almost tempted to trust him : yet, on re-consideration, I was sure I could not enter upon the requested detail.—I felt myself unequal to the task, and was utterly unable to open my heart to a man who evidently beheld me with looks particularly tender. I, therefore, replied, “ that
 “ Lord Woodford had once been instrumental to my deliverance from the
 “ greatest of all misfortunes, but that
 “ I had no connection with him at all :” adding, however, “ that I should be very
 “ glad to hear he did not entertain an
 “ ill opinion of me, as I should, I feared,

“ be considerably hurt by such an opinion on his side.”

Here I stopped; I wonder, indeed, how I was able to say so much, especially as Mr. Sheffield seemed to fix his eyes on me with uncommon attention.

My reply was not, I saw plainly, satisfactory: yet good manners, I imagined, prevented him from urging me any farther upon *that* subject. He affected to give a chearful turn to the conversation, but his endeavours still proved unsuccessful. I was restless, inattentive, unhappy. From what he had thrown out at the play I had thought that Mr. Sheffield had been acquainted with the true cause of Lord Woodford's behaviour to me, about which I had discovered so much impatience. I became, in short, incapable of talking upon any other subject, and pleading, soon afterwards, my imperfect

perfect recovery, I made *that* apologize for my return to my own apartment.

When I was in private, I wept heartily. I reflected upon the striking, and very disagreeable change in Lord Woodford, and upon my inability to come to any eclaireissement about an affair which filled me with such painful sensations, till I was almost bereft of my reason.—'Tis true, I might soon have prevailed on my lord, by a letter, or by only sending Kitty to him, to let me know why he was so greatly offended with me; but pride, as well as prudence, hindered me from taking such a step.—I was not conscious of having done any thing to occasion my lord's reasonable displeasure, and, therefore, could not but think him exceedingly capricious. Prudence, also, forbade me to make any overtures towards the renewal of our correspondence.

Honour too, and a regard for my lord—which I discovered by endeavouring to prevent his differing with his family—all prompted me to be silent, and not to seek to revive an attachment, which his mother had wished with such earnestness to break off; and the time was now arrived, so much desired by my lord's friends: for my lord now could look upon me, in the greatest distress, with the coldest indifference. In consequence of all these reflections, I brought myself to resolve—though my resolution cost me dear—to take no farther notice of what had passed, but to endeavour to appear easy at least, tho' I found it utterly impossible to be really so.—However, as I never had approved of deceit, I was a very awkward hypocrite.

Mr.

LADY WOODFORD. 81

Mr. Sheffield immediately saw, I believe, that I was far from being internally chearful, though I affected to be outwardly so, for he redoubled his assiduities, and sollicitudes to please me: his polite efforts were not, indeed, so successful as he, apparently, wished them to be, yet I made no resistance to them. Concluding, that he knew a great deal more of Lord Woodford than he chose to own, I was in hopes that he would let something fall in conversation, inadvertently, which might gratify my curiosity, though not give my heart all the desired ease.—Animated by these hopes, I continued to listen to him, and accompanied him, at his earnest request, Mrs. Stevens being always of our party, to several public places. Yet I will honestly confess, I did not accompany him to such places, because I expected any plea-

sure by going to them ; I flattered myself that I should have a chance to meet Lord Woodford, and that I might, perhaps, discover the motives which had induced him to behave to me in so strange a manner.

In this mode of life, we remained about a month, from the night I saw my lord at the play.—Mr. Sheffield was now become one of the family : he was really very entertaining, and strove to make the hours pass away agreeably, by every method he could think of ; never did he take an improper advantage of our private interviews, for we frequently happened to be by ourselves.—His company was, therefore, welcome to me, yet I secretly pined at the mortifying change in my lord's behaviour. My health gradually declined ; I lost my appetite ; sleep fled from my eyelids, so
that

that in a very short time I became greatly altered in my person—I was pale, and had an emaciated appearance.

Mr. Sheffield often took notice of the alteration in my looks, and proposed several remedies.—Country air and riding, were those which he most strongly recommended; the season, indeed, just at that time, was not favourable for either; but he insisted upon my making rural excursions on horseback, whenever there was a fine morning; and enforced the necessity of my having recourse to such a proceeding so powerfully to Mrs. Stevens, that she began to tease me about it almost as much as he did. To silence them both, therefore, for they wearied my ears by always talking upon the same subject, I told them one day, that I did not think either my riding, or going into the country, was at all neces-

fary.—“ Besides,” added I, looking at Mrs. Stevens, “ supposing they were, I
 “ am, you know, under Lady Wood-
 “ ford’s protection, and cannot remove
 “ myself without her consent.”

“ How, Miss Osgood,” cried Mr. Sheffield, appearing extremely surprised;
 “ Are you really under Lady Wood-
 “ ford’s care? Is *she* your friend?”

“ She does me the honour to tell me
 “ so,” replied I.

“ Then *she* is, unquestionably, the
 “ person who prevents your being hap-
 “ py with my lord.”

I coloured like fire: but soon recover-
 ing, answered with more spirit than I
 imagined I could, possibly, have dis-
 covered, “ There is so wide a difference,
 “ Sir, between Lord Woodford’s situa-
 “ tion and mine, that an alliance be-
 “ tween us can never be thought of.

“ I ought

“ I ought never, indeed, to have expected any particular favours from his lordship, but I have done nothing to merit his ill opinion.” I could not proceed: remembering, with pain remembering, the many happy days I had passed with him, at his house at—— I burst into tears, and sighs unnumbered forced a passage from my cruelly-agitated bosom.

Unable to bear the grief which overwhelmed me, I rose in order to quit the room.

Mr. Sheffield, rising at the same moment, caught my hand, and made a great many apologies for having, unintentionally, occasioned me so much uneasiness.—“ Since Lady Woodford is your friend,” continued he, “ let me in- treat you, if you have the slightest regard for your health, to acquaint
“ her

“ her with the necessity there is for your
 “ going into the country—She will,
 “ doubtless, consent to your temporary
 “ absence from London, for the promo-
 “ tion of your recovery.”

I staid to hear no more, but hastened
 to my chamber, and sincerely wished
 that my illness—if it was an illness—
 might carry me out of a world in
 which I had so much trouble and vexa-
 tion, so little quiet and content.

To strengthen my wishes, to render
 me still more dissatisfied with the world,
 Lady Woodford made her appearance in
 the evening. After having chatted
 about a quarter of an hour, with Mrs.
 Stevens, upon indifferent things, she
 said, as if meerly by accident; “ When
 “ my son is married—and I hope his
 “ marriage will be finished in a few
 “ weeks—

“ weeks—I will take Fanny down with
 “ me into Northamptonshire.”

I changed colour—I knew not what reply to make, or which way to look. Not a great while before that evening, such a speech would have laid me almost lifeless on the floor; but my lord's neglect, anger, and indifference, had prepared me for every thing dreadful.—I was not, 'tis true, entirely deprived of my senses, but the shock I felt was too severe to be supported.

Lady Woodford saw my distress, and with a view to comfort me, said, “ Nay,
 “ Fanny, after having so heroically
 “ given up my son, and persuaded him
 “ to marry the lady always designed for
 “ him, can you now feel any concern at
 “ his being about to chuse a wife so
 “ every way worthy of him? If you
 “ esteem him, if you even love him as
 “ you

“ you ought, you would be pleased to
 “ hear of his going to do so laudable an
 “ action ; an action which will, in all
 “ probability, secure his future happi-
 “ ness.”

“ Nobody, madam,” replied I, “ can
 “ more truly wish Lord Woodford hap-
 “ piness than myself, and I earnestly
 “ pray to heaven, that he may ever en-
 “ joy it.”

I could say no more ; I went directly
 out of the room. I hated myself for
 having been afflicted by hearing of what
 would, most probably, ensure Lord
 Woodford the esteem of his family, and
 of course his felicity : yet I must confess,
 that I was selfish enough to wish, that I
 had been the person necessary to com-
 plete his happiness.—I had flattered my-
 self that he would have thought me so,
 as I really believed he would never find

a wo-

a woman more willing to make a submissive wife.—Feeling myself the object of his displeasure, I felt sensations painful beyond expression.—“ Why should
 “ he be angry with *me*, because he is
 “ going to marry another woman? I
 “ have done nothing to offend him: I
 “ am in no shape to blame, because my
 “ rank and fortune are not equal to his;
 “ surely, then, he might have parted
 “ with me upon friendly terms.—His
 “ sudden coolness, and his total indifference, have cruelly afflicted my
 “ heart.—Would a man, even of common humanity, have stood by, and
 “ looked on a woman he had never seen
 “ before, in the distress *I* was, without
 “ discovering *some* compassion for her,
 “ if he had not actually chosen to offer
 “ his assistance?—How very unkindly
 “ did Lord Woodford behave by neglecting

“lecting me, and in the most cutting
 “manner too, when I was deeply dis-
 “tressed on *his* account! On his brow
 “sat a sullen kind of discontent, which
 “pierced me to the soul.—And must I
 “see him no more? must I lose him for
 “ever? must I never hear him tell me
 “what I have done to offend him?
 “must I never receive my pardon from
 “him?

Oppressed by these reflections, I felt
 my situation almost insupportable. From
 prudence, from pride, at least, I ought
 to have roused myself; I ought to have
 triumphed over the sorrow which inva-
 ded my heart, but I sunk under the
 weight of it.—A second fever seized me,
 of a more disagreeable nature than the
 first; it was a slow, nervous one. I
 could neither eat, nor sleep, nor take
 pleasure in any thing. The physician,
 who

who attended me, by Lady Woodford's order, declared, that if I was not immediately assisted by air and exercise, a decline might very rationally be expected.

In consequence of the doctor's declaration, Mrs. Stevens and I set out for Kensington, to a lodging which she had taken for me.—A horse was also recommended by Mr. Sheffield, who visited us with as much regularity there as he had done in town; and took an infinite deal of pains to prevail on me to let him teach me the *menage*; but to no purpose.—I was disgusted with him, with every body, with every thing. I only desired to sit by myself, and to try to find out what had caused so sudden a change in Lord Woodford: and as life yielded me no sort of satisfaction, I wished to die.—I could only be persuaded to take a turn now and then in Kensington-Gardens, when

when there happened to be a very fine morning. In those gardens, I was always accompanied by Mrs. Stevens, and Mr. Sheffield : the latter frequently importuned me to let *him*, alone, go with me, when the former was, accidentally, engaged, but he could never carry his point ; nor could he ever make me consent to remove, for a week or ten days, to a house which he had in Berkfhire, on the situation of which, he expatiated with the strongest encomiums.—I paid no attention to his persuasions, or his arguments, for many arguments he had recourse to, in order to convince me of the expediency of a removal.—I told him, “ That I had done every thing
“ which reason, and religion required of
“ me to preserve a life hateful to me, and
“ that I would stay, and resign myself
“ to my fate, where I was.”

In

In a few weeks after my arrival at Kensington, Mr. Sheffield began to mention Lord Woodford's approaching marriage with Miss Bromfield, as a piece of news every where talked of.—“Miss Bromfield,” added he, “is just recovered from a severe illness, which my Lord's neglect had occasioned; and they are now to be seen in all public places together. She is a very fine girl; there is great elegance in her person, and sweetness in her manners; she will, therefore, I imagine, certainly fix Lord Woodford's heart, as he is a man of true taste.”

This intelligence, with the supplemental panegyrick on Miss Bromfield's person and behaviour, did not, you may be sure, tend to make me easier than I was before. On the contrary, they increased my wretchedness; (though, indeed,

deed, there could hardly be any addition to it) they also induced me to think, that Mr. Sheffield—desirous as he was of being more attentive to me than ever—was not the man he had appeared to be.—But to say truth, I had been so much mistaken, that I became out of humour with the whole sex, and cared not whether I ever conversed with a man again.—As Sheffield, however, had been, in the language of the world, extremely polite, and as I was too negligent about every thing to exert myself sufficiently to quarrel with him, I suffered him to be officious about me, without discouraging his assiduities: yet by pleading illness, and the necessity of confining myself to my own chamber, I avoided him as much as possible.

While I was sitting, one day, in a stupified state, Kitty came running into my

my room — “O, madam,” said she, eagerly, “Here is a letter for you, and “I am sure and certain it is from Lord “Woodford.”

Seeing me change colour, seeing me ready to faint, she corrected her vivacity, fearing she had alarmed me too much, and added, “I believe it comes from “*him*: I shall be vastly mistaken if it “does not.”

I took it with a trembling hand: and, in no small agitation, read the following lines:

To Miss Osgood.

THOUGH I have a thousand times resolved to think no more of what has given me such intense disquiet, I should think myself divested of humanity,

nity, could I see you on the brink of a precipice without warning you of your dangerous situation. Sheffield, who, by his behaviour, appears to you, perhaps, in the most advantageous light, has formed the most infamous design against you, which he conceals by a conduct so extremely specious, that both yourself and Mrs. Stevens have been deceived by it. By making you believe that he is desperately in love with you, he hopes to see you fall into his snare. He reckons upon your imagining that his intentions are honourable, and expects you to place a confidence in him, which will give him an opportunity to triumph over your credulity.—Be upon your guard, therefore, for you may be assured that my information is authentic; and that I have neither been actuated by jealousy nor love to take this step.—Conscious of
having

having no interested views upon this occasion, I can, with the sincerest truth, aver, that nothing but an ardent desire to preserve you from the threatened blow against your honour and your peace, could have urged me to trouble you with this letter.

WOODFORD.

You cannot easily conceive, my dear friend, the different emotions which I felt during the perusal of the above letter; and I am sure I cannot describe them.—I changed colour several times: I was, at the first opening of it, animated with hope; I then reddened with vexation—when I read on, and found that my lord was become totally indifferent about me, I turned pale: the concluding words chilled my blood to such

a degree, that it almost ceased to flow in my veins. The letter fell from my hands on the floor, and I sunk back in my chair without sense, without motion.

Kitty screamed for help, but no body happened to be, just then, within hearing. The horrid lamentation she made over me, soon brought me to myself.

“ Good God! madam,” cried she, “ what can my lord have written to affect you so much?”

“ Oh! Kitty,” said I, as soon as I could speak, “ I am for ever lost—ruined every way;—but ’tis no matter: I hope I shall not long suffer.—My lord, however, has acted very kindly to warn me of the mischief intended against me.—Heaven bless him for it!”

“ And

“ And heaven blefs *you*, madam,” replied Kitty, “ for methinks your head
“ rambles strangely.”

“ No, Kitty—My head is light, in-
“ deed, but I am not mad neither.
“ God only knows what I might have
“ been, had not my guardian angel—
“ for surely I may call Lord Woodford
“ so—as he has twice saved me—sent
“ me this timely intelligence.”

“ Then the letter *did* bring good
“ news at last?” cried the honest, affec-
“ tionate girl—“ I thought my lord could
“ never leave you, madam. Oh! had
“ you but seen him the day when he
“ came back, and gave me the letter—
“ I am certain he loves you.”

“ Talk no more of him, Kitty—I
“ must try to forget him—but I must
“ first”—added I, bursting into tears—
“ learn to die.”

Poor Kitty, whom I had actually terrified, said every thing in her power to comfort me, but to no purpose. I insisted upon her leaving me. At the same time, I insisted upon her never letting Sheffield into the house again, and upon charging the rest of the family always to deny me to him.

With difficulty, I prevailed on her to leave me; so urgent was she to be acquainted with my reasons, for giving so extraordinary an order.

When I had shut the door upon her, I threw myself into a chair, and began to read my letter again.—My lord had told me, that he was neither jealous of me, nor in love with me, yet as he had communicated the most friendly intelligence to me, he was, certainly, entitled to my sincerest acknowledgments.—But could I, prudently, make those acknowledg-

ledgments? — Were there not many reasons to be urged against my writing to my lord! — I could not, however, check a strong desire to shew my gratitude. — “It can never be wrong,” said I, to myself, “to be grateful.”

Disturbed as my imagination was, I sat down to thank my lord for his kind warning, without imagining that I should appear in a criminal light to *him*, by so doing, or to Lady Woodford, tho’ I had promised her not to correspond with her son. I was in a very particular situation.

Two or three letters did I write, before I could please myself. My head was, indeed, so disordered, that I found it impossible to deliver the sentiments of my heart with propriety: yet gratitude pushed me on, and operated so strongly, that I at last finished my letter. Not-

withstanding his indifference, my heart overflowed with tenderness, and tho' he had confessed himself no longer my lover, he had, sufficiently, proved himself my friend to merit my unfeigned thanks. Had he not been my friend, he would not have taken the least notice of me.

To the Earl of Woodford.

My Lord,

WITH a heart full of the most grateful sensations for the intelligence you, generously, conveyed to me, with regard to Mr. Sheffield, I take this first opportunity to return my sincerest acknowledgments, tho' I never entertained sentiments for that gentleman different from those which I felt at
the

the sight of a common acquaintance. I am not, however, less obliged to your lordship for your sollicitude about me, for your noble readiness to save me from the danger with which I was threatened. —Immediately availing myself of your most friendly information, I gave orders to be denied whenever Mr. Sheffield made his appearance; and, that he may not have the slightest hopes of success, I am determined to see him no more.

I cannot conclude without intreating your lordship to pardon me for this reply, which you will probably deem unnecessary, and even impertinent, but I cannot bear the thoughts of ingratitude. Pardon me, also, my lord, for any thing which I may have, inadvertently, said or done, to displease you—you, my best friend, my generous deliverer, my liberal benefactor.—Your indifference, my lord,

cuts me to the soul, yet in spite of that indifference, I shall ever remain,

With the truest respect,

And esteem,

Your much obliged

Humble servant,

FRANCES OSGOOD.

When I reviewed the above letter, I made a thousand objections to it:—yet, as I could not write another in my then frame of mind, I resolved to send it. I would not, however, send it by Kitty. I should have been transported, indeed, to have received a minute account of its recep-

reception by my lord, but I thought that I should be guilty of a great impropriety by so doing, and that he might imagine I wished to revive the tender passion in his bosom—(and I certainly *did* wish for the revival of it.) I acted in opposition to my inclination, by not committing my letter to Kitty's care, but I acted, agreeably to the dictates of discretion, by dispatching it to him in another way.

Having touched my bell, Kitty came to me: I bade her carry it to the post-house.

“Had I not better go to my lord, myself, madam?” said she, “and give it into his own hands?”

“On no account,” replied I—“’tis highly improper.”

“It may miscarry by the post.”

“ Let it then,” said I, vexed to death at being so teased to do a thing which I so earnestly desired to do, and from which I was restrained by prudence.

Kitty, silenced by the last reply, uttered in a very peevish tone, left the room—she said not a word, but she looked full as much displeased as *I* was: and I actually was uncharitable enough to impute her eagerness to carry my letter, to a mercenary disposition. I thought, indeed, that she only wanted to throw herself in the way of another *present*.—However, my reflections concerning *her* motives were soon succeeded by others, which gave me far more disturbance: reflections, which made me restless, and unhappy beyond expression.—What the girl had mentioned with the regard to the possibility of my letter’s miscarrying by the post, increased my disquiet.—“ If
“ my

“ my lord receives not my acknow-
 “ ledgments, after having given me so
 “ striking a proof of his friendship, he
 “ will call me, and with reason, the
 “ most ungrateful of women, and think
 “ me entirely unworthy of his atten-
 “ tion.” — I then wished a thousand
 times, that I had permitted Kitty to
 carry my letter: she might have left
 it with his servant, who would not have
 failed to deliver it to him. Without
 her having seen my lord, I should have
 been assured of his receiving it.

With these reflections, and others of
 the same kind, was I tormented long
 after Kitty had left the room.—In the
 midst of them, I was roused by the
 entrance of the maid of the house, to in-
 form me that Mr. Sheffield was below,
 and begged to see me.

I ordered her, directly, to tell him that I was engaged, and then enquired after Kitty.

“She is gone out, madam,” replied the maid.

The same answer I received three hours afterwards.—I then began to fancy—where is the woman who does not, sometimes, flatter herself—that, disregarding the strictness of my commands, she was gone with my letter to my lord.—This idea operated so strongly in my mind, that I grew more composed, and I pleased myself with thinking, that I should hear a circumstantial relation of what passed between her and his lordship: I pleased myself with thinking that she would justify my conduct with regard to Sheffield, if he questioned her about it, and convince him that I had not given Sheffield any encouragement.

—I

—I pleased myself, for once, to think that my positive orders had been disobeyed.

As soon as Kitty returned, I hurried to the top of the stairs, and bade her come into my room, intending to examine her quite unobserved, as I could take such a step without appearing particular; for since my illness, I had kept pretty close to my chamber, and Mrs. Stevens was always willing to let Kitty be with me when she could spare her.

How excessively was I disappointed when she told me, with the greatest alacrity, upon my asking her where she had been, that having procured her mistress's leave, she had put my letter into a post-house at London, imagining that it would go safer from thence, than from Kensington.

I changed

I changed colour, I am sure; I turned from her, shut my door, and burst into tears. I concluded, that my lord would never receive my last letter, about the conveyance of which, I was particularly anxious.

Kitty's new intelligence was certainly very unfavourable to the restoration of my health: I grew worse and worse, as my mind became more and more disordered. Mrs. Stevens began to tease me about Sheffield, and by so doing, retarded my recovery.—She defended his character; she was amazed to find that I harboured the slightest suspicions against him.

To convince her, that my suspicions were not groundless, I produced Lord Woodford's letter. It threw her entirely off her guard, and the words "pique, "and jealousy," escaped her. Those words

LADY WOODFORD. 111

words were, I must confess, the most comfortable ones I had heard for a considerable time : in order, therefore, to enjoy them more fully, I pretended to differ from her entirely : I maintained an opposite opinion, and applied to the letter as a witness to the truth of my assertion.—I had the pleasure to hear her contradict me. I told her, with great earnestness, that my lord was neither troubled with love nor jealousy, as he had expressly declared himself free from those passions, on my account.

“ Had he not been agitated by both
“ of them,” replied she briskly, “ he
“ would not have mentioned either the
“ one or the other.”

The fluttering pleasure which I received from that speech is not to be described. The joy which my heart felt, was diffused over my countenance.

Mrs. Ste-

Mrs. Stevens found out her mistake, and altered her tone, but it was too late. My eyes were opened, and I saw my lord's letter in a very different light. I really fancied that he still loved me, that he was even jealous of Sheffield. This conjecture gave me unspeakable satisfaction, and was, consequently, of more service towards the compleat restoration of my health, than all the remedies which had been prescribed for me. My spirits returned, and I determined to preserve a life which was still, I flattered myself, valued by Lord Woodford. Nay, I began to imagine that there had been no foundation for the report with regard to his marriage with Miss Bromfield, that he was not going to marry any other woman. I began to imagine that Sheffield—whom I resolved never to see again—had invented the tale merely

to carry his point.—My heart danced within me—I looked, I spoke with unusual vivacity, and no longer refused to accompany Mrs. Stevens to Kensington-Gardens.

Just when we were sitting out, one morning, to those gardens, somebody came to her from London on business, and *she*, finding that she should be detained some time, desired me not to wait for *her*, but to go to the gardens, adding, that she would follow me as soon as possible.

I complied, and walked on slowly, not being able to move very fast.

No sooner had I entered the gravel walk, than I heard a person say, "'Tis *she*—'tis *she*."

I felt my heart throb: turning about, I saw Lord Woodford, who exclaimed—
" My

“ My Fanny! but good heaven! how pale, how emaciated!”

He caught my hand—I trembled, but I could not speak.

“ Dear Fanny,” continued he, “ forgive my unjust suspicions; impute them entirely to the violence of my love.”

He then stopped, gazed on me, waited for an answer.—I had no words ready.

“ Will you not forgive me, Fanny?” added he, in plaintive accents.

“ Forgive you, my Lord?” replied I—and paused: my tears supplied the deficiencies of my tongue.

“ My dear, dear girl,” said he, eagerly, “ why this sorrow now? let me wipe away those precious drops.”

Still I could not speak; the transports which I felt on seeing him again, and

on

on seeing him so unexpectedly affectionate, deprived me of the power of utterance, almost deprived me of my senses.

My lord immediately led me to a seat which happened to be near us; placed himself by my side, threw his arm tenderly round me, and intreated me to be composed.—“Tell me, my dearest girl,” added he, “why you weep thus?”

“I weep for joy at the sight of *you*, my Lord,” replied I; “for joy to find that you are not angry with me, that you are so different from the man you appeared to be at our last meeting.”

He pressed me to his bosom while I spoke, with rapture equal to my own. I, then, recollecting what I had so lately heard concerning his marriage with Miss Bromfield, began to fear that we were running into a censurable intimacy.

Yet

Yet while I drew back from his respectfully-tender touch, I sighed to think that I was prohibited the enjoyment of so sweet a satisfaction: a satisfaction, which, in some situations, would have been not only innocent, but laudable.

“Why do you sigh, my dearest girl?” said he, still detaining me, still holding my hand in his; “Do you find it so difficult a matter to pardon me? I was, I own, very unhappy to see you with Sheffield at the play: I was unprepared for such a mortifying sight: I thought him too near you, too officious about you, and I was afraid that his insinuating behaviour had met with encouragement from you. The manner in which you answered him, indeed, confirmed my apprehensions at the time, and a thousand tormenting fancies darted into my mind: but
 “when

“ when I beheld you fainting in his
 “ arms, when I saw your head reclined
 “ upon his bosom, I saw too much.—
 “ I strove to fly from a sight which was
 “ insupportable.—I was, in truth, so
 “ distracted by it, that when you spoke
 “ I only was sensible of the motion of your
 “ lips, I heard not a syllable which you
 “ articulated.—I hurried to remove from
 “ a place in which I ceased to be master
 “ of myself, lest I should have been
 “ guilty of some glaring absurdity.—I
 “ returned home so exceedingly dis-
 “ concerted and unhappy, that Cowley,
 “ who has lived with me from my in-
 “ fancy, supposed me to be very much
 “ out of order. In short, he asked me
 “ so many questions about the state of
 “ my health, that he became quite tire-
 “ some: any other man equally inquisi-
 “ tive, would have been in the highest
 “ degree

“ degree impertinent ; but I was too
 “ well acquainted with his prejudices in
 “ *your* favour, and with his affection for
 “ *me*, to be really offended at his nu-
 “ merous interrogations. I, therefore,
 “ as soon as I could bring myself to en-
 “ ter upon an affair which had given
 “ me so much uneasiness, told him what
 “ I had seen, and under whose care I
 “ had left you.—He immediately quit-
 “ ted me, to make an enquiry after you.
 “ When he came home he said, in or-
 “ der, doubtless, to eradicate from my
 “ fond bosom a passion which had caused
 “ me so much anxiety, persecuted as I
 “ was both by my mother, and the rest
 “ of my family, “ Every body believes
 “ that Miss Osgood is going, very soon,
 “ to be married to Mr. Sheffield.”—I
 “ was shocked at the information : it
 “ confirmed the suspicions I had enter-
 “ tained

“ tained with regard to your con-
 “ stancy : yet I wondered, at the same
 “ time, to hear of Sheffield’s intentions
 “ to marry at all, firmly believing that
 “ no woman but yourself could have
 “ brought about so great a revolution in
 “ his mind. Cowley was, however, so
 “ particular, and so positive, that I
 “ could not, possibly, question his ve-
 “ racity.—Soon after this event, my
 “ mother made a fresh attempt to pre-
 “ vail on me to see Miss Bromfield,
 “ who was, she said, a little recovered ;
 “ assuring me that my friendly atten-
 “ tions, alone, were wanting to com-
 “ plete the recovery of her health.
 “ Lady Woodford could not have
 “ seized a moment more favourable to
 “ her design. Discontented as I was,
 “ and actually jealous of Sheffield, I
 “ caught at every thing which could,
 “ in

“ in any shape, feed my resentment : a
“ resentment so foolish, that I feel my-
“ self at this instant, heartily ashamed of
“ having made a discovery of it to you :
“ degraded in my o “n eyes, I have, no
“ doubt, rendered myself ridiculous in
“ yours.—But to the point ; to gratify
“ that foolish resentment, I agreed to
“ see Miss Bromfield, though I would
“ not, on any terms, be presented to
“ her as a lover : telling my mother,
“ that I could not possibly have any
“ domestic connections with *that* fa-
“ mily.—My mother, however, partial
“ to her young friend, hoped that time
“ and *her* merit would remove all my
“ objections to an union with her, espe-
“ cially when she saw that I could not
“ treat a girl with ill-manners, and ill-
“ humour, who had, evidently, dis-
“ covered a very singular prepossession
“ in

“ in my favour.—In the mean while,
 “ I ordered Cowley to make the strictest
 “ enquiries concerning you; to my ex-
 “ treme mortification I heard that you
 “ was seen every where with Sheffield,
 “ and that those who did not know him
 “ imagined you would soon be married
 “ to him: those who were thoroughly
 “ acquainted with him, thought he had
 “ designs of a different nature.—This
 “ intelligence added fuel to my jealousy,
 “ and considerably strengthened the ill
 “ opinion I had harboured of you:
 “ I was quite convinced that you had
 “ given me up for a man whom you be-
 “ lieved to be altogether independent,
 “ and able to make you a very genteel
 “ settlement. I, then—forgive me Fan-
 “ ny—and not till then, ranked you
 “ among the rest of your sex: and tho’
 “ it pained me to find that *you*, whom
 Vol. II. G “ I had

“ I had so highly esteemed, on whose
“ affection I had so strongly depended—
“ that *you* had deceived me, yet I resolved
“ to conquer a passion which I imagined
“ —blinded by my jealousy—I could not
“ gratify with honour—I resolved to
“ tear you from my bosom.—In short,
“ I determined to make my addresses
“ to Miss Bromfield, to whom I was
“ not, according to all appearances, an
“ object of indifference; and that I
“ might not change my mind—for I
“ very much distrusted myself—I in-
“ formed my mother of my design; yet
“ desired her not to mention it to Sir
“ George Bromfield till I had, myself,
“ spoken to the young lady, as I had no
“ reason to expect a refusal from *him*.
“ My mother complied with my re-
“ quest, and made parties with Miss
“ Bromfield to several places, on pur-
“ pose

“ pose to throw us into each other’s
 “ way.—I did not oppose her proceed-
 “ ings, but my heart was silent with re-
 “ gard to the lady who was to be mistress
 “ of it, and sighed deeply for its lost
 “ Fanny. — Being drawn in, much
 “ against my inclination, to spend an
 “ evening with some gay young fellows,
 “ one of them mentioned Sheffield, and
 “ his having a design upon a fine girl,
 “ who had lodgings at Kensington for
 “ her health, as she had a very delicate
 “ constitution.—“ He has carried on his
 “ scheme hitherto,” continued the young
 “ fellow, “ with great success, by mak-
 “ ing her believe that he intends to
 “ marry her; but I suppose the affair
 “ will end with a trip to Scotland, or
 “ somewhere else; a sham parson may,
 “ perhaps, tack them together nearer
 “ home, if the business cannot be done

“ without the appearance of a marriage.”—I fancied immediately that
“ you was the person whom Sheffield had
“ singled out to impose upon in the most
“ infamous manner, and though I fancied also that I loved you no longer,
“ I could not bear to think of your being betrayed by such a villain; I,
“ therefore, sat down, and wrote a few
“ lines just to apprize you of your danger. I was, at that time, swelling
“ with resentment against you, for
“ having paid the least attention to
“ Sheffield’s conversation, and could
“ not finish my letter without telling
“ you that I neither loved, nor was
“ jealous.—But my heart revolted against my hand.—I was, at that very
“ instant, torn to pieces with jealousy
“ and love. —When your servant
“ brought me your answer, I felt myself
“ self

“ self so much agitated by those two
 “ impetuous passions, that I could not
 “ help discovering a violent propensity
 “ to hear what you could say in your
 “ own defence. Kitty plainly saw, that
 “ I was by no means so indifferent about
 “ you as I had pretended to be. But
 “ what became of me when I read your
 “ dear letter! every word of it pene-
 “ trated my soul!—it immediately ex-
 “ cited admiration, esteem, and love:
 “ and when Kitty informed me, that
 “ you never had the least thought of
 “ Sheffield, and that my unpardonable
 “ neglect had considerably injured your
 “ health, I was almost frantic with
 “ grief, I was wild for an opportunity
 “ to make my peace with you, if possi-
 “ ble. I acquainted Kitty with my
 “ ardent wishes, who told me, that
 “ they could by no means be accom-
 G 3 “ plished,

“ plished, as you had promised Lady
“ Woodford not to receive me, and as
“ you would not, on any account, break
“ your promise to her.—“ Besides, my
“ lord,” added she, “ you are engaged
“ to another lady: Miss Osgood will,
“ therefore, think it criminal to have
“ any farther connections with you.”—
“ When I pressed her to stay, and to
“ take an answer to your letter, she re-
“ plied, “ that you did not know of her
“ coming to me, that you had, indeed,
“ expressly desired her not to come to
“ me, and that she could not, therefore,
“ venture to carry my answer back to
“ her.—I admired the honest and af-
“ fectionate disposition of the girl, who
“ had a second time discovered a very
“ warm attachment to you, but I quite
“ adored *your* principles, and *your* spirit.
“ The tenderness running through your
“ letter

“ letter made me distracted to give you
 “ the most striking proofs of my regret,
 “ of my remorse, for having injuriously
 “ suspected you; to give you the
 “ strongest assurances that I would marry
 “ no woman on earth except yourself,
 “ and to declare my fixed determination
 “ to do every thing in my power to re-
 “ concile my mother to a marriage,
 “ without which, there could be no
 “ happiness for *me* in this world.—Kitty,
 “ finding me so eager to procure an in-
 “ terview with you, told me, that you,
 “ sometimes, walked in these gardens,
 “ but never alone.—I thanked her for
 “ the hint, and assured her, that I would
 “ come here every day till I had seen
 “ you, without paying any regard to
 “ Mrs. Stevens.—How great, how
 “ agreeable was my surprize to see you
 “ appear by yourself! how blest was I to

“ have so charming an opportunity to
 “ speak to you uninterrupted by a third
 “ person ! How doubly blest to find you
 “ so overwhelmed with joy at the
 “ sight of me ! Was you not so
 “ overwhelmed, Fanny ? are you not
 “ happy ? are you not transported ?—
 “ Tell me, my dearest girl.”

“ I have told you already, my lord,
 “ how excessively I was delighted at the
 “ sight of you—I must not tell you so
 “ again : I shall always think of you as
 “ I do *now*, but we must not talk any
 “ more upon this subject.”

“ I see that we must not,” answered
 he, looking tenderly at me ; “ the tears,
 “ I perceive, are ready to start from
 “ those dear Eyes.—Your spirits have
 “ been lowered too much by the shocks
 “ which I have occasioned to them ;
 “ your health has been injured by my
 “ cruel behaviour. I sincerely hope,
 “ how-

“ however, that from this happy moment your recovery, in every shape, will be speedy.—You are now made thoroughly easy with regard to me; you may depend upon my giving my mother no rest till she has approved of the choice of my heart; you may rely on——”

“ Hold my Lord,” said I, interrupting him, with all the firmness I could assume, “ this must not be : Lady Woodford is perfectly right: she shews herself the fondest, the best of Mothers by urging you to marry Miss Bromfield, or any other Lady of equal rank, and equally accomplished, to whom you may find yourself inclined. Comply with her desires, my Lord, rather than with *your own* : if you cannot love Miss Bromfield, look out for another lady : there are numberless women, doubtless, to be met with,

“ who would make it the whole busi-
 “ ness of their lives to engage, and to
 “ preserve your affection : and, provided
 “ the woman you chuse is suitable to
 “ you with regard to family and fortune,
 “ Lady Woodford will not, I imagine
 “ insist upon your marrying Miss Brom-
 “ field.”

“ I will marry no woman in the world,
 “ Fanny, but you ; you alone are capa-
 “ ble of making me happy.”

“ I hope I am my Lord,” replied I
 hastily—“ but not in the way you men-
 “ tion.—I flatter myself that you both
 “ love and esteem me : if I am not mis-
 “ taken you will listen to me ; and I
 “ hope I shall give you sufficient reasons,
 “ by what I am going to say, for your
 “ changing your present kind and
 “ generous intentions with respect to *me*.
 “ —I am not upon a footing with you
 “ in

LADY WOODFORD. 131

“ in point of rank : you will disgrace your
 “ family by introducing me into it ; *me*, a
 “ girl of no birth, with no fortune. I think
 “ myself very happy in having merited
 “ your lordship’s regard, but I am at
 “ the same time, thoroughly sensible
 “ that I am not the Woman whom you
 “ should think of making your wife. —
 “ It is therefore my Lord, from the sin-
 “ cerest affection for you, from the truest
 “ regard for your honour and your peace,
 “ that I insist upon the refusal of an of-
 “ fer which would make me the hap-
 “ piest of my sex, were I in a situation
 “ to deserve the completion of my wish-
 “ es : wishes which must never be gra-
 “ tified. But tho’ I am resolved never
 “ to be accessory to your committing an
 “ irretrievable indiscretion, by giving
 “ you my hand, I will solemnly assure
 “ you, that it shall be given to no
 G 6 “ other

“ other man living — It is impossible
 “ for me to love any man but your
 “ Lordship.”

Here I stopped because I saw my Lord
 impatient to reply.

“ Enough, enough, my dear girl,”
 said he, straining me, affectionately,
 to his bosom, “ your last declaration is
 “ sufficient to hush all my fears. — By as-
 “ suring me that you prefer me to every
 “ other Man, and that you really love
 “ me well enough to relinquish your
 “ own felicity for the promotion — (as
 “ you imagine) of mine, you discover a
 “ regard for me which will, naturally,
 “ attach me to you more strongly than
 “ ever — Your exemplary behaviour de-
 “ mands all the returns in my power ;
 “ your merit is inestimable : I love you
 “ with redoubled ardour, and shall ever
 “ remember with the most lively gra-
 “ titude

" titude the last letter you sent to me,
 " which has, indeed, saved us both from
 " the greatest misery: for I will frank-
 " ly own, that, believing you to be drawn
 " away from me by Sheffield's seducing
 " manners, and being closely driven by
 " my mother to shew some compassion
 " for Miss Bromfield, I might, possibly,
 " have been induced to do a deed which
 " would have plunged us all into wretch-
 " edness.—What an escape have I had!
 " —Yet I shall be still distressed if you
 " do not recover your health, which, I
 " fear, may be still more injured by
 " sitting in this place: let us walk,
 " therefore, my dear Fanny, as long as
 " you dare venture to stay in the gar-
 " dens, and let me intreat you to take
 " all possible care of yourself for your
 " own sake, as well as for mine.—I can-
 " not describe the cutting anxiety
 " which

“ which I have already felt in consequence of your being out of order.”

I thanked my lord earnestly for his solicitude about me : I assured him that I was not so ill as he had imagined me to be, adding, however, that I thought it quite time for me to return home, as I fancied Mrs. Stevens had either been prevented from coming into the gardens, or had strolled into a different walk.

My lord intreated me to give him another half hour, if I found no inconvenience from being so long absent from my apartment. I complied with his request, because I did not intend to meet him again.

He pressed me, extremely, when we parted, to be in the same place the next day, or any other day which would be more agreeable to me, as he should be waiting in hopes of seeing me.

How

How charming was this attention to me! what an enchanting condescension! I almost adored him, and was, consequently, fearful of giving way to emotions of tenderness which must have frustrated my design. I, therefore, neither promised my lord to meet him again, nor took any particular leave of him. I strove, as much as possible, to stifle every rising sigh, to repel every tear which started into my eyes when he bade me adieu.—His last words were, “Take as much care of your health as you would of mine. Remember that my life depends upon your recovery.”

I pressed his hand, and, instead of a reply, clapped my handkerchief to my face, as if I had been incommoded by the wind, but, really, to conceal any improper

proper change in my countenance, and walked away, not once looking back.

A sudden noise, very soon afterwards, obliged me to turn my head; I saw my lord standing quite still with his arms folded, and with his eyes fixed on me intently.

Another look would have ruined me; I hurried home, and then to my chamber, without staying to hear the apology Mrs. Stevens was making for having been hindered from following me.

On my table I found a letter for me: not knowing the hand, I opened it immediately, but when I saw Sheffield's name at the bottom of the paper, I would not read it.—Several letters came afterwards from the same person, and I treated them in the same manner:—I read none of them; by such a behaviour I soon got rid of Mr. Sheffield's importunities,

tunities, and indulged myself with reflecting upon my lord's tender, and firm attachment to me.—The satisfaction I felt from that attachment was transporting, and though I did not design to make an indirect advantage of it, greatly did it contribute towards the restoration of my health.—I recovered apace, and had fortitude enough to keep my resolution by not going to the gardens, agreeably to my lord's repeated intreaties.

Soon after the above interview with my lord, Lady Woodford came to see me.

She started at the alteration in my person so much for the better, and told me, that she thought I looked as well as ever.—“Surely, Fanny,” continued she, examining me more nearly, “you are well enough to return to London.”

I assured

I assured her that I was, and that I only waited for her ladyship's commands.

“ So ready with your obedience !” said she, with a forced smile—“ I may expect then to receive a sincere answer to this question—Have you seen my son ?”

“ I *have*, madam, replied I ; on no account would I deceive your ladyship.

“ I met my lord in Kensington-Gardens, accidentally.—I am sure, on *my* side,

“ —but I will honestly own, that *his* appearance there was occasioned by a letter which I had written to him.

“ How ?” cried she, with a severe look ; “ did you not tell me, that you would never correspond with him ?”

“ I never made a direct promise of that kind, my lady,” replied I ; “ if I had, I should most faithfully have kept it ; but I was, indeed, under a

“ ne-

“ necessity of writing to him : he saved
“ me a second time from ruin, and I
“ should have been the most ungrateful
“ of human beings had I not returned
“ proper acknowledgments for so gene-
“ rous a behaviour.”

I, then, perceiving that my lady did not know to what I alluded, told her all that had passed between us.

When I had finished my little narrative, severity fled from her countenance, and a soft melancholy overspread it. She sighed, and said, “ I now no longer
“ wonder at my son’s late carriage.—
“ You are a good girl, Fanny—but tell
“ me, child, do you not believe that
“ this violent discretion which you af-
“ fect, raises you still higher in his
“ esteem ?”

“ I am sorry your ladyship thinks
“ that my discretion is affected.—I can
“ give

“ give up my lord for *his* honour, and
“ for *your* satisfaction, but I can never
“ consent to lessen myself in his eyes.”

My lady looked earnestly at me.

“ You are a very uncommon girl,
“ Fanny—I wish I could say more,
“ but—”

Here she paused—then proceeded in the following manner—“ If Sheffield had
“ not been suspected of bad designs—
“ designs which my lord’s jealousy suggested to him—would you not have
“ married him?”

“ No, my lady; on no account would
“ I marry Mr. Sheffield.”

“ If that’s the case, you may be
“ assured that my son will marry
“ no woman but you. —Were you
“ once happily settled, child, he
“ might, perhaps, be induced to change
“ his state, but while you continue attached to him alone, he will never
“ marry

LADY WOODFORD. 141

“ marry any other woman. By so doing
“ you nourish *his* hopes, and destroy
“ *mine*.”

Lady Woodford pronounced the latter part of the above speech in such mournful accents, and looked so totally distressed, that she excited my compassion: she also opened my eyes with regard to a proceeding which I could not defend. I, therefore, resolved—tho’ I knew that misery would be my lot; and in spite of my promise to my lord—to enter into the marriage state under the direction of her ladyship, in order to restore *her* peace, and the peace of his family. I thought, at the same time, that my resolution would prove fatal to me; for what would life be without Lord Woodford!—However, I did not declare my determination to her ladyship—she left me exceedingly dejected, and displeased.

pleased. I was not much better satisfied myself; yet I believed that I had done my duty; and that belief served to keep up my spirits.

We returned to London. Sometimes I went to the public diversions to please Mrs. Stevens, but in a very private manner, because I did not chuse, for many reasons, to be much seen.

A little while after our arrival in town, Kitty opened the door one morning, while I was sitting at work in the parlour, and Mr. Seymount came in.

Flying to me, with looks full of joy, he cried, "How transported am I, my
" charming Fanny, to find you at last?
" May my meeting with you be as fortunate as I wish it; I shall then be the
" happiest of men."

I was quite surpris'd at the unexpected sight of Mr. Seymount, but I was not charmed

charmed with his appearance; neither was I sorry to see him, though I thought his address was rather too familiar. I had, before my acquaintance with Lord Woodford, looked upon Mr. Seymount as a very agreeable man: and tho' I was not actually in love with him, at that time, I am not sure whether I should not have felt strong prepossessions in his favour, if I had never known his lordship. I might have, probably, liked him better than any other man. But after I had been so long accustomed to Lord Woodford's delightful society, it was impossible for me to behold *him* in the same light.—Feeling myself in this situation, I drew back with a serious air, and replied, “I am astonished, Sir, that you
 “have found me out.”

(I was also very much shocked, as I could not but suppose that he had gained
 his

his information about me from my mother.)

“ Why,” said he, “ I have, with no
 “ small difficulty, procured this long
 “ wished-for interview. And to confess
 “ the truth, I was greatly hurt to hear
 “ Mrs. Wanley say, that you had eloped
 “ from her with Lord Woodford, and
 “ that you lived with him in a very im-
 “ proper manner: she added, “ I have
 “ been informed that his lordship has
 “ turned her off, and I am altogether at
 “ a loss to know what is become of her.”
 “ —This speech,” continued Mr. Sey-
 mount, “ was delivered in a tone of
 “ concern on your account, but her
 “ concern seemed to be affected; if she
 “ had really loved her daughter, she
 “ would not, I imagine, have been so
 “ calm, and composed.—I was, I own,
 “ Miss Wanley, exceedingly shocked at
 “ the

“ the account I received from your
 “ mother ; as I had, from my first ac-
 “ quaintance with you, felt an inclina-
 “ tion, a tender passion for you. I not
 “ only admired you, I wished to see you
 “ happy, and could not help believing
 “ that you deserved to be so, notwith-
 “ standing all Mrs. Wanley had said :
 “ I was determined, therefore, to make
 “ a farther enquiry.—I hurried to Lord
 “ Woodford : I was just personally
 “ known to him : but I chose to ask his
 “ domesticks some previous questions.
 “ By them I was informed that Lady
 “ Woodford had taken you from her
 “ son’s house, and placed you with a
 “ particular friend of her own : they
 “ added, that it was imagined you
 “ would soon be married to my lord,
 “ with whom you had never lived as a
 “ mistress.—The latter piece of intelli-
 Vol. II. H gence

“ gence was very satisfactory : it was
“ what I had extremely wished to hear :
“ but the former gave me great dis-
“ quiet. However, a few more ques-
“ tions brought out the whole affair.
“ Finding that Lady Woodford strongly
“ opposed your marriage with my
“ Lord ; finding that you and my Lord
“ neither saw each other, nor kept up
“ any correspondence, my hope revived,
“ and I flattered myself, lovely Fanny,
“ that you would no longer refuse a
“ man who had truly loved you before
“ you became acquainted with Lord
“ Woodford, and who had only been
“ hindered from offering you his hand,
“ at that time, by the straitness of his
“ circumstances : he had not then a
“ fortune worthy of your acceptance ;
“ he has it now in his power, by the
“ death

“ death of an uncle, who generously
 “ left him two thousand a year, to
 “ make a suitable provision for her who,
 “ alone, can render his life happy.”

Here he stopped, and waited for my answer. — Quite overwhelmed by the generosity, and affection which he had discovered with a rapidity which astonished me, I could not articulate a reply — I wanted words, I wanted breath, to express my feelings upon the very unexpected occasion.

He saw my embarrassment. — Pressing my hand affectionately, he cried, “ I fear
 “ I have fluttered your spirits, my
 “ dearest Fanny; but take time—I come
 “ not to distress you, my love: I only
 “ hastened to do every thing in my
 “ power to make you happy.”

This was going too far. To call me
my love, was almost to say that every

thing was settled between us: I was, therefore, very eager to correct so great a mistake.—“ Hold,” Sir, said I, “ you
 “ run on too precipitately. I am ex-
 “ ceedingly obliged to you for your ge-
 “ nerous offer, but you have a father
 “ who will, undoubtedly, be full as
 “ averse to me for a daughter as Lady
 “ Woodford is.”

“ No,” replied he, briskly. “ My
 “ father, indeed, while I was dependent
 “ on him, insisted upon my marrying a
 “ woman of his own choice, but as I am
 “ now in a very different situation, he
 “ will give himself no farther trouble
 “ about me: he will not care whether
 “ my wife has a fortune or no.”

“ Perhaps you may be right,” said I,
 gravely, “ but a good father—and such
 “ a father, I suppose, Mr. Seymount to
 “ be—will be, rationally, chagrined at
 “ his

“ his son’s marrying a woman without a
 “ character—I have, it is true, preserved
 “ my virtue, but my reputation is ut-
 “ terly lost, as I have been supported
 “ by Lord Woodford, though he was
 “ too confiderate to take an improper
 “ advantage of me after I had thrown
 “ myself inadvertently into his power.
 “ —You are not yet acquainted with
 “ half my story, Mr. Seymount; give
 “ me leave to relate it.—I shall be
 “ grieved, indeed, to mention my mo-
 “ ther’s behaviour to me, but you are
 “ entitled to my confidence, because
 “ your carriage has been so very gen-
 “ teel.”

He assured me, that he should listen to
 my story with the greatest satisfaction.
 He *did* listen to it with tolerable patience,
 but he changed colour several times
 while I, necessarily, declared my esteem,

and even my affection for Lord Woodford, and more than once, attempted to open his lips to interrupt me. When I concluded with telling him, that Lady Woodford had persuaded me to marry some other man, and, that I had not returned her a decisive answer, he cleared up again, and I saw hope sparkle in his eyes.

When I ceased speaking, he replied,
“ All that you have said, Miss Osgood
“ (for that name seems now to be more
“ agreeable to you than Wanley) only
“ tends to render you more amiable
“ than ever in my eyes. Your person
“ is more lovely, your mind is charmingly improved since I first knew you.
“ —I cannot, therefore, relinquish my
“ first claim to your heart. Lord
“ Woodford has, I see plainly, made a
“ deep impression upon it, but as Lady
“ Wood-

“ Woodford will, most certainly, con-
 “ tinue to oppose your marriage with her
 “ son, you cannot expect to be united
 “ to him; and you will act a kind
 “ part with regard to his lordship, by
 “ giving him up.”

“ That is as *he* happens to think,”
 replied I; “ every thing am I ready to
 “ do for Lord Woodford’s honour, but
 “ I cannot make him wretched.”

For some time our conversation was
 carried on in this disputing strain. Sey-
 mount, at last, observing that what he
 advanced to bring me over to his own
 way of thinking, made me unhappy,
 entered upon a new subject, and strove
 to make his company agreeable: he
 really *was* a very pleasing companion.
 Among other things, he told me, that
 he never should have gone off in so
 strange a manner, had not his father,

having found him out, contrived to decoy him on board a ship, in which he was closely confined till he sailed for Italy.—“ From Italy,” continued he, “ I wrote several letters to you, but I “ suppose, as you had changed your “ name, and place of abode, you never received them.”

On my assuring him, that I had not received a line from him after his abrupt departure, he thus proceeded :

“ On the death of my uncle, who had “ made me his heir, I returned to Eng- “ land, as soon as possible. Immedi- “ ately upon my arrival, I took no “ small pains to discover where *you* re- “ sided ; and I still hope that my future “ life will be spent in promoting *your* “ felicity.”

I only replied with a bow. He then kissed my hand, and took his leave, saying

LADY WOODFORD. 153

saying that he believed he had tired me ; adding, that I should make him very happy by permitting him to wait on me the day following.

I neither assented to his coming the next day, nor opposed it. I was really not prepared for such an attack. Seymour, though handsome, and agreeable, had an easy assurance in his manner, and proceeded always with so much rapidity, that you had no time to put yourself upon your guard : he did almost what he pleased with you.

When he was gone, I had leisure to reflect upon the conversation which had passed between us.—I still loved Lord Woodford to excess, yet I considered that I should discover my affection for him in the best way, by disposing of myself agreeably to Lady Woodford's wishes. But then again, I considered

whether there was a necessity for me to make myself wretched during the remainder of my life to oblige her ladyship? Whether my refusing to marry Lord Woodford would not be sufficient?

“ Besides, can I, still preferring my
 “ Lord to his whole sex, with any degree of propriety, promise to love
 “ and obey another man? Impossible—
 “ And must we both be rendered miserable for life, because one of us has
 “ persisted to indulge a passion, the gratification of which is prohibited by
 “ discretion?—Why, after all, can I
 “ not love Seymount? He is young,
 “ he is handsome, his manners are very
 “ winning, and he has given very strong
 “ proofs of his affection for me, of his
 “ constancy. — How affectionate, how
 “ constant has Lord Woodford been!
 “ —But I shall, unquestionably, injure
 “ him,

“ him, by consenting to be his Wife.
 “ Now, according to Seymount’s decla-
 “ ration, I shall be, in no shape, dis-
 “ agreeable to *his* family.—As to the
 “ fortune and the rank of the two gen-
 “ tlemen, I trouble not myself about
 “ them: I know I could be happier
 “ with Lord Woodford were he a pri-
 “ vate man, and master only of a cot-
 “ tage, than with Seymount, ~~Had~~ he a
 “ ducal coronet and a palace.”

In few words, I wavered so long be-
 tween love and discretion, that I be-
 came almost incapable of thinking at all,
 and therefore endeavoured to banish
 both my lovers from my mind, till I
 could bring myself to reason more clearly
 about them.—Vain were all my en-
 deavours of that kind.

Seymount kept his appointment. A-
 mong a number of fine speeches, he told

me that he had mentioned me to his father in the manner I deserved, tho' he had not been able to do justice to my merit; adding, that his father approved of his Choice.

I sighed at this information; "I am afraid," said I, "that you suppressed some part of my story."

"Not a syllable," replied he, "I related every circumstance which you communicated to me, and my father thinks with me, that a lady who has conducted herself so prudently in so many trying situations must, necessarily, make an exemplary wife.—Let me, therefore, my charming Miss Osgood, hope that you will soon bless me with your hand"—seizing it with ardour.

This was too much—I drew it back instantly: I found myself exceedingly fluttered.

fluttered. To put an end to a conversation which became too embarrassing, I replied, with a serious countenance, " I cannot, indeed I cannot do as you
 " would have me, Mr. Seymount ;
 " tho' I never intend to marry Lord
 " Woodford, I cannot give my hand
 " to any other man—I am bound by a
 " solemn promise, and will, on no ac-
 " count whatever infringe it.

" Well but, when he is certain that
 " you are determined never to marry
 " him, how cruelly will he act by insist-
 " ing upon your keeping so hasty a pro-
 " mise, made, no doubt, before you
 " had reflected upon the excessive ab-
 " surdity of it !"

I returned no reply : a thousand disagreeable reflections crowded into my mind ; reflections which I had endeavoured to drive from it.

Seymount,

Seymount, perceiving my embarrassment, gave a turn to the conversation. He exerted himself, indeed, with so much alacrity to entertain me, that his lively efforts prevented me from dwelling upon occurrences, which I could not remember without painful sensations: and he displayed so many various talents, that the Time slipped away imperceptibly.—He departed at a late hour, and left me in so confused a state, that I could not sit down to reason calmly about any thing. I only recollect that I passed a sleepless Night.

The next morning I rose more attached to Lord Woodford than ever, notwithstanding what Seymount had said and done to recommend himself to me.—The day was spent pretty nearly as the foregoing one had been. The only pleasure I received while the hours heavily succeeded each other, was from the
absence

absence of Seymount : he began to grow troublesome.—Finding that I could not, possibly, bring myself to accept of his generous offer, I resolved to tell him plainly so the next time I saw him, and so put a stop, entirely, to his dangling after me.

As soon as I had made this resolution, I wished to see him, that I might give him a decisive answer ; I had not wished to see him till *that* moment since the renewal of our acquaintance. I wanted to see him *once more*, and *no more*.

As the day advanced I grew restless, and my anxiety, tho' nothing had happened to make me particularly uneasy, was doubled towards the evening. I went to bed without any inclination to sleep. However between four and five o'clock, I fell into a dose : I was soon waked from it by Mrs. Stevens, who told me that Lord Woodford's gentleman

man was below, and earnestly desired to see me.

I started up, and rubbed my eyes—I could hardly tell whether I heard right or not—I could not, any way, account for Lord Woodford's servant coming to me in the night upon business of such importance as to require my being waked.—I feared that he had been taken ill suddenly, and therefore, hastily, cried, while I was hurrying on my cloaths, “How is my Lord!—Where is he?”

“Mr. Cowley will deliver his message to nobody but yourself, madam,” said Kitty; “and he begs you would make haste.”

This answer alarmed me still more. I ran down stairs with my cloaths half on and half off.

As soon as I came into the parlour, Mr. Cowley begged my pardon for having frightened me.—“I am very unea-

“fy

“ fy madam,” said he, “ because I am
 “ afraid my Lord is bent upon an ac-
 “ tion which may turn out fatal to him,
 “ and if he is I don’t know who can save
 “ him from it but *you*, Madam ; your
 “ persuasions will have weight with him,
 “ for I am pretty sure that you are the
 “ cause of the quarrel.”

“ Quarrel ?” said I, trembling—
 “ what ? who ?—carry me to him, Sir,
 “ —if *my* life can save *his* it shall be free-
 “ ly sacrificed.”

“ I have a coach at the door madam,”
 replied he, “ and if you please I will
 wait on you to his lordship.”

Mrs. Stevens who was present at this
 short, but very interesting conversation,
 having risen when I was called, seeing me
 look exceedingly terrified, proposed to
 accompany me ; and I gladly, for many
 reasons, accepted of her kind offer.

While

While we were going to my lord's, Mr. Cowley told us, that a young gentleman, of the name of Seymount, had been twice with Lord Woodford the preceding day, and that a note which his lordship received from him on the evening of that day had determined him to send for his lawyer immediately.—“ My lord,” continued he, “ ordered himself to be called “ at four o’ clock in the morning—Before he went to bed he wrote a letter, “ and directed it to be sent to you if he “ neither returned, nor dispatched a “ message by ten o’ clock. By these “ proceedings, all in a hurry, I was very much alarmed, and ventured to “ prevail on his lordship, as he had honoured me with his confidence upon “ many occasions, not to meet his adversary, but to no purpose; on the “ contrary, my lord finding me refractory,

“ tory, threatened to discharge me if I
 “ would not be silent. As I could not
 “ therefore persuade my lord to listen to
 “ me, I stole out, called a coach, and
 “ hurried to fetch *you*, Madam, hoping
 “ that, by the influence you have over
 “ my lord, you might make him willing
 “ to compromise the affair between him
 “ and Mr. Seymount without fight-
 “ ing.”

This intelligence, you may imagine,
 was sufficient to distract me ; I became,
 indeed, almost frantic.

On our arrival at my lord's house we
 were told, that he had been gone out
 above half an hour.

Wild with grief, I foolishly attempt-
 ed to throw myself out of the coach to
 run after him; but Cowley and Mrs.
 Stevens, stopped me; informing me
 that I should get to the place I wanted
 to

to be at much sooner in a carriage than on foot.—I did but faintly hear what they said. I permitted Cowley, however, to order the coach to Hyde-Park, and to bid the fellow drive as fast as possible.—All the way he went I cried out, with my hands clasped, “O! my God! —save him!—save him!—we shall be too late—He will be murdered before we can come to his assistance.”

At last the coach approached the spot to which Cowley had ordered it.

Putting out my head, I screamed.

At a little distance we perceived two men. Cowley bade the coachman stop. I jumped out—I cannot tell how—I saw my lord, my dear lord and Seymount thrusting at each other.

I ran—I flew between their swords.

My lord called out, loudly, “Hold, Seymount—’tis Fanny”—He then, throwing

throwing away his sword, caught me in his arms—"My dear dear girl," said he.

I heard no more—Terror, Love, Joy—a thousand mixed emotions deprived me of my senses.

I did not recover my intellects till I was in the coach: I then found myself supported by Lord Woodford, who called upon me in the tenderest accents.

I raised my languid head, charmed with the sound of his melodious voice, and asked him—but with much difficulty—"if he was hurt."

"Not at all, my Fanny," replied he.

"Do not say so—do not say so"—perceiving Blood upon his ruffles.—

"Do not deceive me—You are wound-

ded—indeed you are."

"Tis but a scratch," said he; "you have saved my honour, and my life:

"and

“ and I will spend the remainder of
 “ the life you have preserved in perpetual endeavours to make you happy.”

I made no answer : I only sighed : I was too much affected to talk at that time—My head had rested on my lord’s bosom, but when I came sufficiently to myself to be sensible of my situation, I attempted to raise it : I found, however, that I was too weak, so violently had I been agitated.

My lord, having watched me with the tenderest attention, threw his arm round my neck to place my head where it was before, and I was totally incapable of making any resistance.

In this situation we reached Lady Woodford’s house, who was, with Lady Anne in the hall, extremely inquisitive about her son, having heard that he

had

had been challenged ; and the confused report had prodigiously alarmed her.

My lord lifted me out of the coach, and led me into the parlour. His mother and sister hung about him, and asked a hundred questions, astonished no doubt at the sight of *me*.

“ Fanny, madam,” replied my lord, to his mother, “ has saved my life : and
 “ the remainder of my days shall be
 “ spent with *her*, never will we be separated again.”

This speech I heard, but very faintly heard, while I sat upon the sofa on which my lord had placed me, so little was I recovered from my fright.

Lady Woodford, throwing her arms round her son's neck, cried, “ It shall
 “ be so—My joy on seeing you safe,
 “ will make me consent to any thing :
 “ if Fanny has really preserved your
 “ life

“ life, may you be happy together ! But
“ tell me how all this happened ? ”

“ Excuse me, my dear madam,” replied my lord, “ at present, but accept
“ of my sincere thanks for your appro-
“ bation—I cannot taste any joy till this
“ amiable girl is recovered from the dis-
“ order which her affection for me occa-
“ sioned.”

Then, snatching me to his bosom, he cried, “ Fanny, my life, my all, be
“ comforted; I am in no danger now,
“ and my mother approves my choice.
“ —look up, and tell me that you
“ also approve it, and that it is in my
“ power to make you happy.”

I felt the tender pressure to his generous breast ; but was, for some time insensible to all that he, Lady Woodford, and Lady Anne, could do towards

wards my recovery.—I opened my eyes—I heard all the consoling speeches which were addressed to me, but I could not utter a syllable. I looked steadily at my Lord, who sat by me, holding my hand and gazing on me with inexpressible tenderness.—I heard him say to Lady Woodford, and to Lady Anne, in melancholy accents, “ I fear she is too deeply affected.—Poor girl! what has she suffered for *me*? can I ever repay her, should she recover?” added he, with a heart breaking sigh—The ladies endeavoured to give him hopes of my being better soon, but he did not seem to believe them: saying to himself softly—“ I am afraid I have been too precipitate—she has been excessively hurried.”

Lady Woodford and Mrs. Stevens then withdrew. My lord said to Lady

VOL. II.

I

Anne,

Anne, "Do pray, sister, call for a little wine and water."

While she was gone to order it, my lord again strained me to his bosom with an ardor equally arising, I thought, from affection and from grief. By that procedure my wishes to relieve him were increased—I made a strong effort to speak: I opened my lips but my words died away upon them.—I could only press his hand.

The servant appearing at that instant at the door, Lady Anne took the glass from him, and bringing it to me, herself, whispered something to persuade me to drink, but in an endearing voice, which excited new sensations.—On a closer view of that lovely person, whom I had once beheld with so much jealousy, I was charmed with her beautiful appearance; doubly charmed to behold the
sister

sister of the man to whom I was, with the consent of his family, going to be united—to behold her so sweetly condescending; so kindly officious about me—I was in such a violent agitation upon the occasion that I burst into tears—the tears of joy—the tears of gratitude. By *them* I was immediately relieved. I then attempted to make Lady Anne *some* acknowledgment for her polite behaviour to me.

“ You will have time enough, my
 “ dearest girl,” said my lord, “ to thank
 “ Lady Anne, hereafter; at present,
 “ consider *me* a little: and think how
 “ impatiently I wish to hear you confess
 “ what you have hitherto concealed
 “ from me; restrained, I hope, by no-
 “ thing but discretion:”

“ What would you have me confess
 “ my lord?” answered I, in a falter-

ing voice, and with a look which expressed all that my tender heart felt for him.

“Your love for me, Fanny,” replied he, eagerly.

“Have not I a thousand times made *that* confession with my eyes?”

“You have, you have,” cried he, closely embracing me—Then, taking Lady Anne, who was going to leave us, by the hand, “Let me” continued he, “unite two sisters, who will be as nearly related to each other in their persons, when I am rendered the happiest of men, as they are in their tempers.”

Lady Woodford, and Mrs. Stevens now returned to us. My lord left me, for a moment, to acquaint his mother with the satisfaction she had afforded him by consenting to his Marriage. Penetrated by her condescension, I would have paid

paid my thanks to her in the humblest manner : but both she and my lord prevented me.

“ Sit down, Fanny,” said my lady, placing herself on the other side of me, “ and compose yourself while my son tells us how he came to quarrel with Mr. Seymount.”

“ Being informed, yesterday morning,” said his lordship, “ that a gentleman, called Seymount, desired to speak with me, I recollected the name immediately.—I had, you know, Fanny, suffered no small uneasiness at one time on *his* account—I, therefore, gave orders for his admission. He accosted me with great politeness, and told me, that he found I had pretended to a lady with whom he was extremely enamoured. I have been assured by the lady herself,” continued he, “ that she never intended to

“ marry your lordship, but that she has,
“ unfortunately, promised you never to
“ marry any other man : My business then
“ my lord, is to intreat you to release Miss
“ Ofgood from her promise; you will act
“ cruelly by confining her to a single life,
“ merely because she declined an alli-
“ ance with you from the most generous
“ motives.”—“ This address to me was
“ handsomely delivered, but had it
“ been delivered with the voice of an
“ angel it would not have been suffi-
“ ciently persuasive to make me give up
“ my Fanny.—“ I will never give her
“ up, Sir,” replied I, “ but with my
“ life : especially as I have strong rea-
“ sons to believe that every thing will
“ be in time settled to our mutual satis-
“ faction.—He appeared to be not at
“ all pleased with my answer, and said
“ so much about the impropriety of my
“ marrying

“ marrying Miss Osgood, that I began
 “ to think he grew exceedingly trou-
 “ blefome—I could not help letting him
 “ know that I found him very imperti-
 “ nent. He left me abruptly. In the
 “ evening I received an insulting letter
 “ from him, in which he appointed a
 “ meeting in Hyde-Park.—I was ex-
 “ tremely unwilling to draw my sword
 “ upon fuch an occafion; but, had I re-
 “ fufed compliance with Mr. Sey-
 “ mount’s challenge, I fhould have been
 “ more expofed, and in a more mortifi-
 “ cing manner, to his infolence. I,
 “ therefore, made proper arrangements
 “ before I fet out upon my expe-
 “ dition.—I left a letter for you,
 “ Miss Osgood, and then proceeded to
 “ the place nominated for our hostile
 “ interview. I had, previously, deter-
 “ mined, however, to fay all in my

“ power to deter my antagonist from gi-
 “ ving a loose to a resentment which
 “ he had absurdly encouraged, as he
 “ could not, rationally, have any thing
 “ to do with the engagements of a lady
 “ with whom he had no connection; as
 “ he could not, with any propriety,
 “ dispute her prepossession in favour of
 “ another man. But, when I met my
 “ gentleman, he was in too great a
 “ hurry to listen to reason; to hear me
 “ speak, indeed—He drew his sword
 “ before I was ready to defend myself;
 “ for I resolved not to proceed to action
 “ without compulsion.—He rushed up-
 “ on me with such fury, that I had not
 “ time to save myself, with all my address,
 “ from the point of his weapon: I on-
 “ ly received, however, a slight scratch
 “ upon my wrist, but I, probably,
 “ should have had the sword though
 “ my

“ my body, at the next thrust, if Fanny
 “ had not arrived, most seasonably, to
 “ my relief; I mean, to put an end to
 “ a very disagreeable affair which might
 “ have been attended with consequen-
 “ ces fatal to Seymount or to *me*, and,
 “ perhaps to both.—Yet, welcome as
 “ my Fanny’s arrival was to me, I was
 “ inexpressibly terrified when I saw her
 “ running between our swords: and
 “ little less was my anxiety on her ac-
 “ count, when I saw her fainting in
 “ my arms.—Seymount, also, appeared
 “ to be extremely shocked at her situa-
 “ tion, and said, with a voice expressive
 “ of the deepest discontent, “ I per-
 “ ceive, my lord, that you are the hap-
 “ py man, and that were I to be master
 “ of the *field*, I should never be able to
 “ win the *lady*.”—Mrs. Stevens, after
 “ having assisted *me*—Seymount, also,
 I 5 “ joined

“ joined *his* assistance, and endeavour
 “ to recover my dearest girl—Finding
 “ that she was in a strong fit, she propo-
 “ sed to have her lifted into the coach,
 “ which might carry us all, she said, to
 “ you, madam” — turning to Lady
 Woodford “ if I pleased, as you had
 “ certainly heard of the intended duel,
 “ and must have been, consequently,
 “ very much alarmed about me. I readi-
 “ ly assented to so reasonable a proposal,
 “ as I resolved never to be again separa-
 “ ted from my Fanny. Seymount help-
 “ ed us to place her in the coach, but
 “ excused himself from attending us,
 “ tho’ he asked my permission to call
 “ and enquire after Miss Osgood’s
 “ health, a piece of civility to which I
 “ could not well return a forbidding an-
 “ swer. This madam,” bowing to his
 mother “ is the real history of my expe-
 “ dition

LADY WOODFORD. 179

“ dition to Hyde-Park this morning;
“ and as it has produced your approba-
“ tion with regard to the woman of my
“ heart, as I see my dearest girl recove-
“ red from her fright on *my* account, I
“ shall ever remember it without regret.”

Lady Woodford, after having listened, with the strictest attention to the above interesting narrative, declared herself very well satisfied with the conclusion of it.—Rejoiced to see her son again unhurt; she was also very much pleased to find that he had not wounded his adversary. From the natural benevolence of her disposition, she would have been considerably pained if any of *her* family had occasioned distressful situations in any other.

As to myself, who had the greatest reason in the world to exult at the happiness around me, to which I had been fortu-

nately, instrumental, as well as at my own particular felicity, I sat, silently contented, and absolutely incapable of articulating my feelings.—I could only utter monosyllables—now and then a *Yes*; now and then a *No*.

As soon as I recovered from the delirium of joy into which I had been thrown by the above mentioned proceedings in my favour, I endeavoured to express the gratitude of my heart in the strongest terms: but my lord stopped me, in the tenderest manner imaginable; and indeed, while I listened with greedy ears, to the many flattering things he said to me, I was not in the least desirous of interrupting him.—I gave myself up to the enjoyment of the most delicious sensations I had ever felt. Often did my lord exclaim, while he sat by me, Fanny, my dearest girl, you say
nothing

nothing—Are you not recovered? will your spirits never return? I could only reply to such fond questions by tender glances, by affectionate pressures of his hand.—I appeared, indeed, so deeply affected by the change in my situation, that Lady Woodford, more than once, told her son, upon his earnestly desiring to know how I did, not to hurry me: adding that nothing but time could restore my former tranquillity.

For some days my joy was so excessive, that I hardly eat or slept; and disagreeable consequences were apprehended by all the family, from the very event which had so long and so earnestly been wished for, by Lord Woodford, and, I will honestly own, by myself.—However my lord *would* hurry the preparations for the ceremony which was to unite us for ever, and even chid me, several

veral times, for not appearing in as much haste ; telling me that I had never loved so truly as he did, and that there was an impatience discoverable in the most delicate woman upon a similar occasion, to which I seemed to be an utter stranger. I sometimes laughed off his gentle reproaches ; sometimes, indeed they were so warm that they brought tears into my eyes : whenever he saw them he wiped them away with apologies, which failed not to make me sincerely forgive him. For every disquieting emotion which he, quite unintentionally, I am sure, occasioned : most of all, when he visited Seymour, made us a visit, one day, after our meeting in Hyde-Park ; he behaved with great politeness : a respectful tenderness seemed to have succeeded the violent passion which he had professed for me. He asked my pardon ; he asked my

LADY WOODFORD. 183

my lord's pardon, and solicited his friendship.—“ I do not absolutely despair of yours, madam, ” added he, (turning to me) “ with my lord's approbation.”

I made no reply to those words, but my lord declared that as he was completely happy himself, he had it not in his power to refuse his friendship to the man who had, tho' undesignedly, been instrumental to his felicity ; and that he therefore desired the continuance of his acquaintance.

Lady Anne appeared, I thought, to be entirely of her brother's opinion, and to be also exceedingly pleased with Seymount's company, who treated her with a polite deference highly insinuating. Lady Woodford, too, did not look as if she was dissatisfied with her daughter's visible partiality in his favour.

Seymount

Seymount was genteel, well-bred, sensible, and agreeable; and as Mr. Seymount, his father, was possessed of a very large estate, he might, without any impropriety, with his independent fortune, and his expectations, aspire to an alliance with Lady Anne, who was a very amiable creature: her personal charms were attractive: She had an exceeding good understanding; and she had many shining accomplishments: her good nature, super-added to her other attractions, rendered her compleatly alluring.

Lady Anne exerted herself to convince me that she sincerely approved of me for a sister: it was her whole study to make herself agreeable to me: to make every thing, indeed, about me, appear in an agreeable light.

At my lord's particular desire, I remained at Lady Woodford's from the day

LADY WOODFORD. 185

day I was brought to her house from Hyde-Park. As soon as I began to recover my health and spirits, I was introduced to all my lady's company in the character of her son's *ward*; I was, therefore, treated, in every respect, as a young person of equal rank with those who protected me. Lady Woodford furnished every thing fit for my appearance in her family; but my dress took up the least part of my attention—I was more solicitous to acquire manners suitable to the station to which I was going to be raised: animated by such a solicitude, I, naturally applied to Lord Woodford for his friendly advice; being very well assured that, by following his instructions, I should become more and more qualified to appear to advantage as *his* wife: free from many little awkwardnesses which excite laughter, if not contempt
among

among people of fashion. When I acquainted him with my wishes of this kind, his charming countenance was brightened with a bewitching smile, and he replied, leading me to the glass—
 “Of all women in the world, Fanny,
 “you need not be apprehensive of ap-
 “pearing in an aukward light any-
 “where.—I wish not to have you more
 “polished than you are in any respect,
 “lest you should lose that enchanting
 “simplicity which I adore, which I ne-
 “ver yet saw, in so amiable a degree,
 “in any of your sex.”

Pardon me, my dear friend, for repeating those encomiums :—when you recollect that they were lavished on me by Lord Woodford, you will not think that I can repeat them too often.

Determined to make my lord's pleasure the chief object of my attention, I
 continued

continued to avail myself of all those little ways which had proved so winning to him, in private; but when I mixed in the *great world*, I endeavoured to copy the behaviour of Lady Woodford, and Lady Anne with minuteness; considering them as standards for taste and politeness; yet without affecting to imitate their manners and high breeding, that I might not be thought eager to assume the airs of a woman of quality. In a short time I found myself quite easy in my new sphere of life: grandeur became familiar to me; I was only afraid that I should not be able to keep the affections of the man whom I adored. —Not that I suspected my lord's honour; not that I doubted his constancy; but as he had taken a sudden fancy to *me*, I could not help being apprehensive that he might feel as sudden an inclination
for

for *another woman* ; I was not perfectly easy, neither, with regard to Miss Bromfield, whom I really pitied—How could I forbear pitying the woman whom Lord Woodford had rejected ! —Yet I feared she might, one day, make reprisals on me. I had heard of many men who, after having refused women, in a manner forced upon them, had been sensible of their error, and found them exceedingly pleasing. The dread of such a change in my lord, in the man on whom I doated, tended to keep me humble, and prompted me to venture to ask him how Miss Bromfield did, and whether he had really beheld her with eyes of indifference.

He, frankly, replied, that she never had appeared to him the sort of woman whom he could love : adding, that on his believing my affections to be fixed upon

upon Mr. Sheffield, he had endeavoured to repair the loss he had sustained by a new attachment; but that an hours conversation with Miss Bromfield had convinced him he could not have any connections with her.—He concluded with saying, that he was extremely glad he had not given her any reason to suppose he particularly liked her.

Thus you see, my dear friend, my lord's conduct was perfectly regular and consistent, honourable and just. However, the more satisfied I was with *him*, the more dissatisfied was I with *myself*; because I thought I was not worthy of the splendor and felicity which I was going to enjoy with him.—I could not help wishing, sometimes, that my birth had been more suitable to his, lest he should, in a moment of discontent, re-
proach

proach himself for what he had done for me. These reflections naturally brought my mother to my mind. I sighed to think that she had not been capable of feeling for me what parents—not divested of humanity—generally feel for their children. Never did I observe the affectionate behaviour of Lady Woodford to Lady Anne, without recollecting the first longings of my infancy when I yearned for that maternal tenderness which I had never experienced. Yet I was resolved, unkindly as I had been treated by my mother, to endeavour to make her life quite comfortable, if possible, as soon as I had it in my power.

Lord Woodford, having surprized me, one day, in a very serious humour, and rather with a melancholy appearance,

ance, occasioned by the recollection of what passed, relating to myself, during my infant years, insisted upon my telling him the cause of my dejection, and when I informed him of it, he intreated me to be quite contented, as every thing should be done to make my mother satisfied with me; adding, that I should not, by being *his* wife, be prevented from paying the duty of a daughter, tho' my mother had not merited so much attention from me.

“ Indeed, my lord,” replied I. “ I am
 “ greatly indebted to her, notwithstanding
 “ the treatment I have received
 “ from her, for having educated me in
 “ a manner which has rendered me worthy of your lordship’s notice.”

My lord declared himself enchanted with my sentiments, but told me, that

he

he would not own my mother had done any thing towards forming my character : imputing all the merit on which he complimented me, to my innate goodness of heart.

The day, at last, arrived, destined for the completion of my happiness. My lord, generously, settled a thousand a year on me, and allowed me the three hundred, already mentioned, for Pin money : he also presented a thousand pounds to me for cloaths, and a most brilliant set of jewels. For all these proofs of his liberality, I returned him my sincerest thanks : the presents were valuable in themselves, but the hand of the giver made them doubly so in my eyes.

I desired Mrs. Stevens to let me have Kitty to wait on me, as my lord and I, both, esteemed her for her attachment to me ; and her mistress chearfully parted with

with her. Kitty, the faithful Kitty (now Mrs. Maxwell, with whom you are well acquainted) was dressing my hair early when my lord came to go with us to church, as he had always slept at his own house.

Very soon afterwards one of the servants appeared, and said to me, "Somebody wants to speak with you, madam."

"Well," replied Kitty, who, immediately saw the impropriety of admitting a visitor on the very morning of my wedding day, "and did not you tell the person that Miss Osgood was engaged and could not be seen?"

"I *did*" replied he, "but she says that she has business of the utmost consequence, and will not leave the house."

This unexpected importunity, at such a time, alarmed me exceedingly.

I feared that some cruel accident had happened to destroy my happiness : I trembled, and could not speak—But what became of me when I saw my mother enter my dressing-room and advance towards me !

I sunk back in my chair, from which I had made a fruitless effort to rise, and could only look on her with the greatest astonishment.

Without the least, apparent, discomposure, she cried, “ So, Miss, I have
“ found you at last : I suppose you
“ do not in the least imagine, that as
“ you are under age, by some years,
“ your mother’s consent to your marriage is necessary.”

I was extremely disconcerted, still more so at the intimidating manner in which she addressed herself to me ; but the appearance of Lord Woodford, who at that instant, entered

entered the room, restored me to the full possession of my faculties, and encouraged me to reply, rising at the same time, " You would have been consulted, Madam, undoubtedly, upon this occasion, had I thought it possible for you not to be transported with the honour Lord Woodford is ready to do me, by making me his wife."

" I *may*, certainly, be brought to consent," answered she, with an affected haughtiness, " upon *some* conditions."

" You have no right to make any conditions," said a person, immediately, whom I had not, in my confusion, observed. " *Charlotte*—for that lady's name is not *Frances*—owes you no duty; you are not her mother."

Here was astonishment not to be described. We all seemed struck dumb, while the person who spoke last, (and in

whom both my lord and I recognized Mrs. Burdet) proceeded in the following terms, addressing herself to my lord ; to Lady Woodford also, and to Lady Anne, who had by this time, joined us.—

“ This young lady—looking at *me*—was
 “ delivered to me to be nursed when she
 “ was not above a fortnight old, by a
 “ woman who said she had reasons for
 “ keeping her birth a secret ; she gave
 “ me ten guineas with her, charged me
 “ to be careful of her, as she would, in a
 “ proper time, be demanded, and added,
 “ that her name was Charlotte
 “ Selwyn : I had also a daughter of
 “ this Mrs. Wanley’s to nurse, of the
 “ name of Frances, who had never
 “ been much taken notice of by her
 “ mother, and who died about two
 “ months after Miss Charlotte was
 “ brought to me : Mrs. Wanley was
 “ then

“ then in the country. My husband
 “ and I, firmly believing that Miss
 “ Charlotte would be left upon our
 “ hands, as nobody had enquired after
 “ her, agreed to put her off upon Mrs.
 “ Wanley for her own daughter, as
 “ they were nearly of an age, and not
 “ much unlike each other.—Pray God
 “ forgive me for this fraud! it was
 “ my first sin.—Mrs. Wanley, at the usu-
 “ al time, carried home her supposed
 “ daughter. Not long afterwards, my
 “ husband died, and I was taken into
 “ an old gentlewoman’s family to wait
 “ upon her : a distant relation of hers,
 “ a kind of Gentleman, tho’ with a ve-
 “ ry small fortune, took a liking to
 “ me, but demurred about marrying
 “ me, because I had been in so low a sta-
 “ tion of life as to nurse children : to
 “ remove his objections, I told him that

“ few people knew I had been so em-
 “ ployed, and that I could silence even
 “ those.—In short, I prevailed on him to
 “ marry me, but as I married him en-
 “ tirely for what little he had, we lived
 “ very unhappily together—On his dy-
 “ ing without a will, I came in only for
 “ my thirds, which were too small for
 “ my subsistence, I therefore took a
 “ house and let lodgings. However,
 “ before my last husband died, I met
 “ Mrs. Wanley in the street near her
 “ own house ; she spoke to me, and ask-
 “ ed me if I would go home with her,
 “ and see Fanny. I hesitated at first,
 “ but afterwards consented, thinking
 “ that a refusal might create suspicions ;
 “ I only desired Mrs. Wanley not to men-
 “ tion to her daughter, or any body else,
 “ that I had ever taken in nurse chil-
 “ dren, on Mr. Burdet’s account. I
 “ found

LADY WOODFORD. 199

“ found Miss Fanny, whom I knew to
“ be Charlotte, by a mole under her
“ right ear, grown a very fine girl, and
“ I was, at that time glad to see she had
“ been so well managed : Yet I was
“ surprized in two or three years after,
“ during which I had, more than once,
“ called at Mrs. Wanley’s, to meet
“ her in the street, running from her
“ mother, who had, she told me,
“ agreed to sell her to Sir Thomas
“ Combes, and intreating me to protect
“ her. Thinking, at first, that she
“ would be a trouble to me, I refused,
“ but on second thoughts, considering
“ that I had received money for the
“ care of her when she was an infant,
“ and that hardly any of it had been
“ spent upon her, I gave her leave to
“ go home with me. She painted
“ flowers for her livelihood, till Mrs.

“ Wanley, finding she was at *my* house,
“ came and told me Sir Thomas would
“ give me a handsome sum if I would
“ connive at his carrying her off. I
“ am ashamed to own that I could not
“ resist the temptation thrown in my
“ way.—I pretended to have a fall near
“ the baker’s who served me, and sent
“ for her from thence on purpose to de-
“ coy her into the street : but I was
“ punished for my wickedness. She
“ was rescued, as I afterwards heard, by
“ this Gentleman—(turning to Lord
“ Woodford) and Mrs. Wanley would
“ not suffer Sir Thomas to pay me for
“ my trouble. Soon after this event,
“ I was seized with a violent fit of the
“ stone which brought me to the brink
“ of the grave, and made me think seri-
“ ously of all my sins : yet tho’ I deceiv-
“ ed Mrs. Wanley into the bringing
“ up

“ up this child as her own, I considered
 “ that she had deserved to be deceived
 “ for her unnatural behaviour to her :
 “ but when I reflected on my having
 “ consented to betray the poor innocent
 “ girl, at *her* age, into the hands of
 “ Sir Thomas, my conscience bitterly
 “ reproached me, and during the vio-
 “ lent pangs I felt, while I lay racked
 “ with my disorder, I was often tempted
 “ to discover all I knew about Miss
 “ Charlotte, tho’ I could not tell to
 “ whom, nor what advantage my disco-
 “ very would be of to her. A few
 “ weeks ago, when I was confined to
 “ my bed, a person came to see me, and
 “ asked me if I remembered her, adding,
 “ What is become of Charlotte Sel-
 “ wyn, whom I brought you to nurse
 “ about eighteen years ago?—I started
 “ at the question, and was once temp-

“ ted to say that she died an infant, as
“ nobody could disprove such a declaration ; but a sudden pang came
“ across me, and made me resolve to
“ confess the truth, which I did : assuring her, however, at the same time,
“ that I acted, as I thought, for the best,
“ by placing her with Mrs. Wanley,
“ but I was silent about the attempt to
“ carry her off ; I only said that she
“ had left me, and that I knew nothing concerning her. Last night the
“ same person came again—“ I have
“ heard, said she, an imperfect story
“ with regard to the lady whom Lord
“ Woodford is going to marry ; they
“ tell me she is Mrs. Wanley’s Daughter ; therefore, if you have not deceived
“ me, this lady must be Charlotte Selwyn.”—As I was then a little better,
“ I offered to go with her to Mrs. Wanley,

"ley, to ask her what she knew of the
 "matter, and I told her what I have
 "now related: she replied, "If what
 "you have told me is true, you de-
 "serve to be hanged; but I am sure
 "you have invented this tale to serve
 "some bad purpose, and I will have
 "nothing to do with you; I desire
 "you won't think of troubling Lord
 "and Lady Woodford with such an
 "idle story, as my lord's family will
 "then refuse their consent to marry a
 "a girl owned by nobody." Mrs.
 "Clayton answered, "Miss Charlotte,
 "madam, has a father living, who will,
 "I hope, own her: he is very able to
 "give her a fortune, and his name is
 "Seymour."

No words can describe the astonish-
 ment of all present at the conclusion of
 Mrs. Burdet's intelligence. As for my

lord and myself, we were equally apprehensive of a discovery which might separate us for ever.—We looked full of wonder.—“Chear up, my Fanny ;” said he, every moment attentive to me—
 Chear up my Fanny, all will go well.”

“It will indeed my lord,” said Mrs. Clayton—(who had, till then, stood behind Mrs. Burdet — they had both been let in together, soon after my supposed mother, on there insisting that they had something to reveal of the greatest importance.) “Miss Charlotte
 “Selwyn was placed under the care of
 “Mrs. Burdet by me, when she was not above a fortnight old : her mother was the
 “only daughter of Sir Thomas Combes.

“Gracious Heaven !” exclaimed I,
 “from what have you not delivered me,
 “my lord ?”

“Yes, madam,” continued Mrs. Clayton, “Sir Thomas is your grand-
 “father.

“ father. Mr. Seymount had long
 “ been in love with Miss Combes, on
 “ whom I waited, but never could pre-
 “ vail on his father to consent to their
 “ marriage, unless Sir Thomas would
 “ give her a fortune : however, on *his*
 “ refusal, the lovers found means, tho’
 “ unknown to *me*, as their meetings
 “ were abroad, to be happy without his
 “ leave. My young lady at length,
 “ with much contrition, informed
 “ me of the consequences with which
 “ those meetings had been attended,
 “ vowing that she never would see Mr.
 “ Seymount again, if I would but assist
 “ her upon the approaching, and drea-
 “ ded occasion. To make short of my
 “ story, I contrived matters so that she
 “ was delivered of a fine girl with the
 “ utmost privacy : the midwife and my-
 “ self were the only persons acquainted
 “ with

“ with the affair: the former took care
“ of the child till I heard of Mrs. Bur-
“ det as a nurse: my young lady then
“ gave me twenty guineas, ten of which
“ I placed with Miss Charlotte Selwyn
“ (for so I was ordered to call her) in
“ Mrs. Burdet’s hands. Soon after-
“ wards, on my lady’s going to France
“ with a friend of her mother’s, I car-
“ ried the other ten guineas to the nurse,
“ not knowing who to trust with the
“ secret, and intending to see the child
“ again when we returned to England.
“ But my lady dying in about a month
“ after our arrival at Paris, I went into
“ the service of another English family,
“ with whom I remained in France and
“ Italy, till a few weeks ago—Hearing
“ of the death of an uncle who had left
“ me an annuity, I resolved to come back
“ to my native country, the sight of
“ which

“ which brought my first dear lady so
 “ strongly to my mind, that I determined
 “ to enquire after the child, and Mrs.
 “ Burdet told me what she has related:
 “ Then, finding that the obscurity of
 “ her birth only had hindered her alli-
 “ ance with Lord Woodford, I thought
 “ it my duty to clear up that point: I
 “ hope I have done it to the satisfaction
 “ of every body present, and I dare be-
 “ lieve that Mr. Seymount will be
 “ very much pleased to acknowledge
 “ the young lady for his daughter;
 “ whom I am happy to see so lovely
 “ and accomplished, for the sake of my
 “ dear lady, who, bating that one mistake
 “ in her conduct, was the most amiable
 “ of women.”

Here she stopped, and received
 the approbation of Lord and Lady
 Woodford. As to myself, I was lost in
 amazement,

amazement, and a kind of bashful satisfaction. I rejoiced to find that Mrs. Wanley, who had discovered so few maternal sensations, was not my mother, but I grieved for the indiscretion of her to whom I really owed my birth.

My lord, seeing my agitation, strove to calm my disordered mind.

My lady proposed to Mrs. Clayton the making known to Mr. Seymount his daughter's situation, first asking her son if he admitted the propriety of such a procedure.

“Undoubtedly, madam”, replied he; “tho’ with regard to myself, let
“my wife—for she will soon be my wife
“—find a father or not, let her be cal-
“led Fanny or Charlotte, she will be
“equally dear to *me*; yet, I shall always
“prefer the name of Fanny, because I
“knew her first by *that* name.”

I bowed,

I bowed, and thanked him—thanked him also again and again, for having saved me from Sir Thomas, and from Mr. Seymount, from a grandfather, and from a brother.—Wonderful are the ways of Heaven!

Mrs. Wanley, as soon as Mrs. Clayton left us to go to Mr. Seymount's, would have walked off, but my lord insisted upon her staying till her return, to give evidence, if necessary; she was therefore conducted into the parlour with Mrs. Burdet—My Lord, Lady Woodford, Lady Anne, and myself, then talked over the unexpected *denouement* of my little history. My lord murmured exceedingly at our wedding's being postponed, unavoidably, to the next day.

In the midst of his tender complaints Mrs. Clayton returned, and with her came the two Mr. Seymounts, father and
“son;

son; the former cried out, "Where is
 " my girl?—Many and many fruitless
 " enquiries have I made after the
 " daughter of my Charlotte."

Falling at my father's feet, I begged
 his blessing.—As soon as he had blessed
 me, we wept over each other. Young
 Seymount then, ever impetuous, rushed
 into my arms—the words, *brother—sister*
 —instantly interchanged, made an al-
 most insupportable addition to the plea-
 sure which swelled my father's heart—
 " Since you are destined," said my bro-
 ther, in his lively manner, "to be married
 " to Lord Woodford, I am heartily
 " glad that you prove so nearly related
 " to me, otherwise his lordship would,
 " most probably, check my transports.
 " upon this animating occasion."—

We could not help smiling at this
 sprightly effusion of my brother's—

" You

"You know, Charlotte," continued he, (for that is now your name, I think) "that I had always a natural propensity "to love you."

Lord Woodford told him that he should be always happy to call him *brother*—laying a particular emphasis on that word, and looking archly at the same time, at Lady Anne.

Lady Anne's face glowed while she complimented him about his new sister.

He gallantly, replied, "That he "would not for more than he could "name, have her ladyship so near him in "the table of consanguinity."

The next thing to be done was to dismiss our informers. Mrs. Wanley was suffered to depart, sufficiently unhappy by the contempt of every body in the room. Mrs. Burdet was pretty smartly reprimanded, but afterwards forgiven.

As

As to Mrs. Clayton, she was, as she deserved to be, handsomely rewarded.

The next morning my father gave me, with looks, strongly expressive of satisfaction, at the altar, to my lord, and, by so doing, made me the happiest of women.—My father told his son, at the same time, that he must spare me part of his fortune, out of regard to the memory of my mother, and out of affection to myself.

In spite however of the felicity which I enjoyed, I could not help lamenting the fate of an unfortunate mother : with my tears, on that mother's account, I mixed fervent acknowledgments to heaven, and to my amiable husband, for having preserved me from a similar fate. As to Sir Thomas, my grandfather, every body thought it best not to take any notice of him; after his behaviour

to

to his daughter and to me, no honour could result from an alliance with him.

—His own remorse, it was highly probable, would, one day, sufficiently punish him for all his criminal proceedings.

My dear lord, being obliged to make a visit to his uncle in Derbyshire, who once occasioned so much uneasiness to me, chose to leave me here, lest I should be too deeply affected by the melancholy scene to which he had been summoned, as his uncle was given over. During *his* absence, I became as easy as I could possibly be, at such a juncture, in your acquaintance. You urged me many times to inform you of the history of my life, after having heard me mention several parts of it, which you thought extraordinary. I have obeyed you by writing it ; but my lord will not

let

let me send it to you till he has perused it himself.

My dear lord Woodford, has perused it, and he tells me that it has given him more satisfaction than he can express.— May he be ever as well pleased with me as he is at present, and then I shall ever subscribe myself your *happy*, as well as your sincere friend,

CHARLOTTE WOODFORD.

F I N I S.

In a few Days will be publish'd

(In Two Volumes, Price 4s. few'd)

J E S S Y;

OR, THE

B R I D A L D A Y.

A N O V E L.

Written by a L A D Y,

After the *Manner* of the late Mr. *Richardson*,
(Author of *Clarissa*, &c.)

But *not revised* by that celebrated Writer.

Printed for F. and J. N O B L E.

Lately published,

The following NOVELS.

V I Z.

I. **T**HE Undutiful Daughter; or the History of Miss Goodwin, 3 Vol. 9s. bound.

II. The Modern Couple; or, the History of Mr. and Mrs. Davers, 2 Vol. 6s. bound.

III. The Contrast; or, the History of Miss Welldon and Miss Mosely, 2 Vol. 6s. bound.

IV. Belle Grove; or, the Fatal Seduction, 2 Vol. 6s. bound.

V. The Captive; or the History of Mr. Clifford, 2 Vol. 6s. bound.